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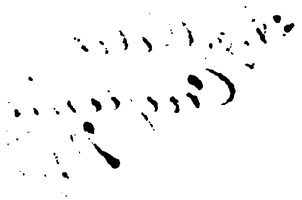

TREATISES

UPON THE

LIFE, WALK, AND TRIUMPH

OF

FAITH.

BY THE

REV. W. ROMAINE, A. M.

STEREOTYPED BY A. CHANDLER, NEW-YORK.

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LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

WILLIAM ROMAINE, an English divine and writer of great popularity, was born at Hartlepool in the county of Durham, Sept. 25, 1714. His father, one of the French Protestants, who took refuge in England upon the revocation of the edict of Nantz, resided at Hartlepool as a merchant, and particularly as a dealer in corn. He had two sons and three daughters, whom he educated in the strict doctrines and discipline of the church of England, and lived to see well settled in the world before he left it in 1757. His second son, William, gave indication, at a very early age, of considerable talents, and a laudable eagerness to improve them. This induced his father to send him to the grammar-school, at Houghton-le-Spring, a village in the road from Durham to Sunderland. This school was founded by the celebrated Bernard Gilpin, rector of that parish at the memorable era of the Reformation. At this seminary Mr. Romaine continued seven years, and in 1730 or 1731 was sent to Oxford, where he was entered first at Hertford college, and thence removed to Christ-church. He resided principally at Oxford till he took his degree of master of arts, Oct. 15, 1737, having been ordained a deacon at Hereford, a year before, by Dr. Egerton, bishop of that diocess.

His first engagement was the curacy of Loe Trenchard, near Lidford, in Devonshire. In the year following he appears to have been resident at Epsom, in Surry, from the date of a letter from him, Oct. 4, 1738, to Rev. William Warburton, upon the publication of his 'Divine Legation of Moses.' In the same year he was ordained a priest by Dr. Hoadly, bishop of Winchester. His title for orders was probably a nomination to the church of Banstead, which he served some years, together with that of Horton, near Epsom, being curate to Mr. Edwards, who had both these livings. At Banstead he became acquainted with Sir Daniel Lambert, lord mayor of London in 1741, who had a country-house in this parish, and appointed Mr. Romaine to be chaplain during his mayoralty.

The first sermon which he printed had been preached before the university at Oxford, March 4, 1739. It was entitled, 'The Divine Legation of Moses demonstrated, from his having made express mention of, and insisted so much on, the doctrine of a future state; whereby Mr. Warburton's attempt to prove the Divine Legation of Moses, from the omission of a future state, is proved to be absurd, and destructive of all revelation.' This was followed by a second sermon, preached also before the university, entitled, 'Future rewards and punishments proved to be the sanctions of the Mosaic dispensation.' These sermons and the letter above mentioned to Mr. Warburton involved him in a personal dispute* with that gentleman; Mr. Romaine in his letter attempted to be witty and sarcastic; Warburton used the same weapons, and could handle them better. The controversy, however, did not last long. Mr. Romaine appeared to more advantage in 1742, in another sermon before the university, entitled, 'Jepthah's Vow fulfilled, and his daughter not sacrificed.' The ingenuity with which he proved this opinion obtained him much credit, and was by many looked upon as a new discovery; which it certainly was not, as the same point was contended for in a

* See an account of it in 'The Works of the Learned,' for August 1739.

sermon printed in the works of Dr. Thomas Taylor, of Aldermanbury, an eminent Puritan divine, who died in 1632. Besides other sermons before the university, he preached one in 1757, entitled, 'The Lord our Righteousness;' in consequence of which he was refused any future admission into the university pulpit. He interpreted the articles of the church in the strict Calvanistic sense, which at this time gave great offence.

Mr. Romaine had been engaged in superintending for the press a new edition of Calasio's 'Hebrew Concordance and Lexicon,' in four volumes folio; a work which employed him seven years, and in 1747 he published the first volume. The original of this work was the concordance of Rabbi Nathan, a Jew, entitled 'Meir Nethib,' published at Venice in 1523, fol. with great faults and defects. A second edition was published at Basil by Froben, much more correct, in 1581, fol. The third edition is this of Calasio, which he swelled into four large volumes, by adding, 1. A Latin translation of Rab. Nathan's explanation of the several roots, with the author's own enlargements. 2. The Rabbinical, Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic words, derived from, or agreeing with, the Hebrew root in signification. 3. A literal version of the Hebrew text. 4. The variations of the Vulgate and Septuagint. 5. The proper names of men, rivers, mountains. Mr. Romaine's work is a very splendid and useful book, improved from that of Calasio; but in point of usefulness thought greatly inferior to Dr. Taylor's Hebrew Concordance. The Hon. and Rev. Mr. Cadogan, in the life of Mr. Romaine, censures him for having omitted his author's account of the word which is usually rendered God, and having substituted his own in the body of the work; a liberty which no editor is entitled to take, although he may be justified in adding, by way of note, to what his author has advanced.

The theological sentiments of Mr. Romaine were not so common in his early days as they are now, and therefore rendered him more conspicuous. As a clergyman of the church of England he adhered to the most rigid interpretation of the thirty-nine articles. The grand point which he laboured in the pulpit, and in all his writings, was the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ. He was also a zealous disciple of the celebrated Hutchinson, at a time when he had not many followers in this kingdom. From some dissatisfaction, however, or want of success in his ministry, he appears to have formed an intention of leaving England, and settling in the country of his ancestors. He was prevented from executing this design, by what he piously deemed a providential interposition. He had actually made the necessary preparations, and was going to the water-side, in order to secure his passage, when he was met by a gentleman, a total stranger to him, who asked him if his name was not Romaine. He answered that it was. The gentleman had formerly been acquainted with his father, and, observing a strong resemblance to him in his son, was induced to make the inquiry. After some introductory conversation, he told him, that the lectureship of the united parishes of St. George's Botolph-lane and St. Botolph's Billingsgate was then vacant; and that, having some interest in those parishes, he would exert it in his behalf, if he would become a candidate for the lectureship. Mr. Romaine consented, provided he should not be obliged to canvass in person; a custom which he always thought inconsistent with the character of a clergyman, and against which he openly protested many years afterwards, when he was candidate for the living of Blackfriars. He was chosen lecturer of St. Botolph's in 1748, and the year following lecturer of St. Dunstan's in the West. In the person of his predecessor in the latter (Dr. Terrick,) two lectureships were united: the one founded by Dr. White, for the use of the benchers of the Temple; the other a common

parish-lectureship. Mr. Romaine was elected to both, and continued some years in the quiet exercise of his office, until an opposition arose, which ended in a lawsuit that deprived him of the parish-lectureship, but confirmed him in that founded by Dr White, and endowed with a salary of eighteen pounds a year. Lest this should be removed from the parish, the use of the church was granted to him; but as Lord Mansfield's decision was, that seven-o'clock in the evening was a convenient time to preach the lecture, the churchwardens refused to open the church till that hour, and to light it when there was occasion. His predecessor, however, Dr. Terrick, then become bishop of London, interposed so effectually, and gave such a character of Mr. Romaine, that this ungenerous opposition ceased, every proper accommodation was allowed to his congregation, and he continued quietly to exercise his ministry here to the end of his life.

In 1750 he was appointed assistant morning preacher in the church of St. George, Hanover-square. The rector, who both appointed him to this place, and removed him from it, was Dr. Trebeck. Mr. Cadogan informs us, that 'the first act originated not in personal friendship, but in the recommendation of his character: the latter arose from the popularity and plainness of his ministry. He preached Christ crucified amongst those who are least disposed to receive him. The church was filled with the poor, and forsaken by the rich: and that which (as a nobleman is said to have observed) was never complained of in a playhouse, was admitted as a just cause of complaint in the house of God. When notice was given him, that the crowd of people attending from different parts caused great inconvenience to the inhabitants, who could not safely get to their seats, he received it in the most placid manner, and said, he was willing to relinquish an office which he had faithfully performed, hoping that his doctrine had been Christian, and owning the inconvenience which had attended his parishioners.'

About 1752, he was appointed professor of astronomy in Gresham college. His knowledge of the subject was sufficient to qualify him for this situation, but his zeal for Hutchinsonian principles led him to dispute some parts of the Newtonian philosophy in a way which did not greatly advance his reputation, and he did not retain his professorship long. He was far more popular afterward in his opposition to the Jew Bill. All his writings on this subject were collected by himself, and printed by the city of London. On quitting his situation in St. George's, Hanover-square, in 1756, he became curate and morning preacher at St. Olave's, Southwark; and, when he left it in 1759, he became morning preacher, for nearly two years, at St. Bartholomew the Great, near West Smithfield. In 1764, he was chosen by the inhabitants of St. Andrew, Wardrobe, and St. Anne, Blackfriars, to be their rector, the right of presentation, which is vested in the crown and in the parishioners alternately, then belonging to the latter. This produced a suit in chancery, which was decided in his favour in 1766. In this situation he continued during thirty years, and was probably the most popular preacher of his day. It was noticed in the newspapers that, on the Good Friday, after his being settled here, he administered the sacrament to upwards of five hundred persons, and on the Sunday following to upwards of three hundred, numbers which had never been remembered by the oldest inhabitant. From this time he devoted himself to the service of his parishioners and his hearers at St. Dunstan's, but was frequently solicited to plead the cause of charity for various institutions, and few preachers ever produced more money on such occasions.

His useful labours at length terminated on Sunday, July 26, 1795. During his illness, which lasted seven weeks, his zeal, his faith, his animated

views of immortality, accorded with the uniform example of his life, and evinced, in the gradual approaches of death, the hope, and consolation, and triumph of a Christian. His character throughout life was uniform and regular: his surviving friends have dwelt on it with pleasure, and it certainly was as free from frailty as the imperfect state of human nature can admit. The only prominent objection was a degree of hastiness of temper, or occasional irritability; but even that he had conquered, in a great measure, many years before his death. By them, to whom his preaching was acceptable, and to whom his memory is yet dear, his printed works are held in high estimation, and have gone through various editions. Besides the single Sermons, Calasio's Concordance, and a Comment on the 107th Psalm, Mr. Romaine published, in the course of his life, 1. 'Twelve Sermons upon Solomon's Song,' 1759. 2. 'Twelve Discourses upon the Law and Gospel,' 1760. 3. 'The life of Faith,' 1763. 4. The Scripture Doctrine of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,' 1765. 5. 'The Walk of Faith,' 1771, 2 vols. 6. 'An Essay on Psalmody,' 1775. 7. 'The Triumph of Faith.'

These were collected soon after his death, in a uniform edition, with some additional pieces and a life, in which a very full account is given of his religious principles and ministerial labours. He appears to have been in some respects an extraordinary character. Although usually reproached with being a methodist, a word which is not always very clearly understood by those who employ it in the service of controversial animosity, he was one of the most zealous advocates for the church of England that has appeared in modern times. His attachment to her doctrines and discipline, indeed, was such as left him but a moderate share of respect for the dissenters, by whom he was often accused of intolerance and bigotry. Towards the close of life, however, it is said, he entertained more candour towards the Calvanistic Dissenters, although he was to the last a strenuous advocate for the service and forms of the church; and it is certain that many dissenters of the stricter sort contributed to increase his audiences, which were in general the fullest ever known in London. Nor ought it to be forgotten in the catalogue of his virtues that he evinced, in money matters, a great share of independent spirit. He refused large offers from the booksellers for the use of his name to religious compilations, and on one occasion no less than 500*l.* when his annual income did not amount to half the sum. His funeral, besides being attended by a very numerous concourse of friends, and a long train of carriages of persons of considerable rank, was honoured with the presence of the city marshals and other officers, and funeral sermons were preached on the occasion in various churches, some of which were afterward published. Mr. Romaine married in 1755 a Miss Price, who survived him about six years, by whom he had a daughter who died young, and two sons, the eldest, Dr. Romaine of Reading, the second, Capt. Romaine, who died in 1782, at Trincomale, in the island of Ceylon.*

* Life prefixed to his works by the Hon. and Rev. William Bromley Cadogan

PREFACE

TO THE

LIFE OF FAITH.

THE design of this little treatise is to display the glory and all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to encourage weak believers to glorify him more by depending and living more upon his all-sufficiency. Whatever grace he has promised in his word, he is faithful, and he is almighty to bestow, and they may receive it of him freely by the hand of faith. This is its use and office, as a hand or instrument, having first received Christ, to be continually receiving out of Christ's fulness. The apostle calls this 'living by faith,' a life received and continued, with all the strength, comforts and blessings belonging to it, by faith in the Son of God, and he also mentions the work of faith, its working effectually in the hearts and lives of believers, through Christ strengthening them, and its growing in them, yea growing exceedingly from faith to faith, by the power of him who loveth them. This is the subject; and it properly belongs to those only who have obtained the true faith given them of God, and wrought in their hearts by his word and Spirit. Such persons meet with many difficulties every day to try their faith, and to hinder them from depending continually upon the Lord Christ for all things belonging to life and godliness. By what means these difficulties may be overcome is plainly taught in Scripture, is clearly promised, and is attained by faith, which becomes daily more victorious, as it is enabled to trust, that he is faithful who promised. The strengthening of it I have had all along in view, hoping to be the means, under God, of leading the weak believer by the hand, and of removing hinderances out of his way, until the Lord thoroughly settle and establish him in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

But I must admonish the reader, that I do not expect this merely from what I have written. It is too high and great a work for any mere man. Faith is the gift of God: and he alone who gives it, can increase it. The Author of the faith is also the finisher of it; and we do not use the means to set the Lord of all means aside. No, we use them that we may find him in them. It is his presence, which makes the use of them effectual. By this, and this only, can any reader of this little book be rendered stronger in faith. Being well assured of this, I have therefore looked up to him myself, and it will be for thy profit also, reader, to look up to him in prayer, for his blessing. Entreat him of his grace to countenance this feeble attempt to promote his glory and his people's good. Beg of him to make thy reading of it the means of thy growth in faith, and to accompany it with the supply of his Holy Spirit to every believer, into whose hands it may fall. And forget not in thy prayers and praises to remember the Author.

Since the first printing of this book several spurious editions have been published at London and Dublin, very full of faults and mistakes: for the sake of setting my own sentiments correctly before the public, I have given Mrs. Trapp leave to print from my own copy. I bless God who has enabled me to revise the press, and to put my last hand to the work, by making such additions and alterations, as seemed to me necessary, to render the subject more plain to common readers. In this, and in all things, I desire to approve myself to my Lord and Master, whose I am, and whom I serve, and whatever good I have or do, to him be all the praise. Blessed be his name this day, henceforth, and through the day of eternity.

April 24, 1793.

What method then shall he take? the more he strives to make himself better, the worse he finds himself: he sees the pollution of sin greater; he discovers more of its guilt; he finds in himself a want of all good, and an inclination to all evil. He is now convinced that the law is holy, just and good, but, when he would keep it, evil is present with him. This makes him deeply sensible of his guilty helpless state, and shews him, that by the works of the law he cannot be saved. His heart, like a fountain, is continually sending forth evil thoughts; yea, the very imaginations of it are only and altogether evil, and words and works partake of the nature of that evil fountain from whence they flow: so that, after all his efforts, he cannot quiet his conscience, nor obtain peace with God.

The law, having done its office as a schoolmaster by convincing him of these truths stops his mouth that he has not a word to say, why sentence should not be passed upon him; and there it leaves him, guilty and helpless. It can do nothing more for him, than shew him that he is a child of wrath, and that he deserves to have the wrath of God abiding upon him for ever: for 'by the law is the knowledge of sin.'

The gospel finds him in this condition, as the good Samaritan did the wounded traveller, and brings him good news. It discovers to him the way of salvation contrived in the covenant of grace, and manifests to him what the ever-blessed Trinity had therein proposed, and what in the fulness of time was accomplished. That all the perfections of the Godhead might be infinitely and everlastingly glorified, the Father covenanted to gain honour and dignity to his law and justice, to his faithfulness and holiness, by insisting upon man's appearing at his bar in the perfect righteousness of the law: but man, having no such righteousness of his own, all having sinned, and there being none righteous, no, not one; how can he be saved? The Lord Christ, a person in the Godhead coequal and co-eternal with the Father, undertook to be his Saviour: he covenanted to stand up, as the head and surety of his people, in their nature and in their stead, to obey for them, that by his infinitely-precious obedience many might be made righteous, and to suffer for them, that by his everlastingly-meritorious stripes they might be healed. Accordingly in the fulness of time he came into the world, and was made flesh, and God and man being as truly united in one person, as the reasonable soul and flesh in one man. This adorable person lived, and suffered and died, as the representative of his people:

the righteousness of his life was to be their right and title to life, and the righteousness of his sufferings and death was to save them from all the sufferings due to their sins; and thus the law and justice of the Father would be glorified in pardoning them, and his faithfulness and holiness made honourable in saving them: he might be strictly just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.

In this covenant the Holy Spirit, a person co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son, undertook the gracious office of quickening and convincing sinners in their consciences how guilty they were, and how much they wanted a Saviour, and in their judgments how able he was to save all that come unto God through him, and in their hearts to receive him, and to believe unto righteousness, and then in their walk and conversation to live upon his grace and strength. His office is thus described by our blessed Lord in John xvi. 13, 14. 'When the Spirit of truth is come he shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you;' that is, when he comes to convince sinners of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, he takes of the things of Christ, and glorifies him by shewing them what a fulness there is in him to save. He leads them into all necessary truth in their judgments, both concerning their own sinfulness, guilt and helplessness, and also concerning the almighty power of the God-man and his lawful authority to make use of it for their salvation. He opens their understandings to comprehend the covenant of grace, and the offices of the eternal Trinity in this covenant, particularly the office of the sinners' surety the Lord Christ, and he convinces them that there is righteousness and strength, comfort and rejoicing, grace for grace, holiness and glory, yea treasures infinite, everlasting treasures of these in Christ, and hereby he draws out their affections after Christ, and enables them with the heart to believe in him unto righteousness. And the Holy Spirit having thus brought them to the happy knowledge of their union with Christ, afterward glorifies him in their walk and conversation, by teaching them how to live by faith upon his fulness, and to be continually receiving out of it grace for grace according to their continual needs.

The corruption of our nature by the fall, and our recovery through Jesus Christ, are the two leading truths in the Christian religion; and I suppose the persons, for whose sake this little tract is drawn up, not only to know them, but also to be established in them, steadfastly to believe and deeply experience them. The necessity of their being well grounded in

them is very evident: for a sinner will never seek after nor desire Christ, farther than he feels his guilt and his misery; nor will he receive Christ by faith, till all other methods of saving himself fail; nor will he live upon Christ's fulness farther than he has an abiding sense of his own want of him. Reader, how do these truths appear to thee? has the law of God arraigned thee in thy conscience? hast thou been there brought in guilty, and has the Spirit of God deeply convinced thee by the law of sin, and of unbelief, and of thy helplessness, so as to leave thee no false resting-place short of Christ? Has he swept away every refuge of lies? and thus put thee upon inquiring what thou must do to be saved? If not, may the Lord the Spirit convince thee, and in his own good time bring thee to the knowledge of thyself, and to the saving knowledge of and belief in Christ Jesus, without which this book can profit thee nothing. But, if thou hast been thus convinced, and the Lord has shone in thy understanding, and enlightened it with the knowledge of the way of salvation, then read on. May the Lord make what thou readest profitable to thine establishment in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus.

There are two things spoken of faith in Scripture, which highly deserve the attention of every true believer. The first is, the state of safety, in which he is placed by Christ, and is delivered from every evil and danger in time and in eternity, to which sin had justly exposed him; and the second is, the happiness of this state, consisting in an abundant supply of all spiritual blessings, freely given to him in Christ, and received as they are wanted by the hand of faith out of the fulness of Christ. By which means, whoever has obtained this precious faith ought to have a quiet conscience at peace with God, and need not fear any manner of evil, how much soever it be deserved, and thereby he may at all times come boldly to the throne of grace, to receive whatever is necessary for his comfortable walk heavenward. Every grace, every blessing, promised in Scripture, is his, and he may and does enjoy them so far as he lives by faith upon the Son of God: so far his life and conversation are well ordered, his walk is even, his spiritual enemies are conquered, the old man is mortified with his affections and lusts, and the new man is renewed day by day after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. And from what he already enjoys by faith, and from the hopes of a speedy and perfect enjoyment, the Scripture warrants him to rejoice in the Lord with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

It is much to be lamented, that few live up to these two privileges of faith. Many persons, who are truly concerned about the salvation of their souls, live for years together full of doubts and fears, and are not established in the faith that is in Christ Jesus; and several, who are in a good measure established, yet do not walk happily in an even course, nor experience the continual blessedness of receiving by faith a supply of every want out of the Saviour's fulness. These things I have long observed, and what I have been taught of them from the Scripture and from the good hand of God upon me, I have put together, and throw it as a mite into the treasury: I am sure it was never more wanted than at present. May the good Lord accept the poor offering, and bless it to the hearts of his dear people, to the praise of the glory of his own grace.

For the clearer understanding of what shall be spoken upon the life of faith, it will be needful to consider, first, what faith is; for a man must have faith before he can make use of it: he must be in Christ, before he can live upon Christ. Now faith signifies the believing the truth of the word of God: so says Christ; 'Thy word is truth:' it relates to some word spoken, or to some promise made by him, and it expresses the belief which a person who hears it has of its being true. He assents to it, relies upon it, and acts accordingly. This is faith. And the whole word of God, which is the ground of faith, may be reduced to two points, namely,—to what the law reveals concerning the justification of a righteous man, and to what the gospel reveals concerning the salvation of a sinner. An examination of these points will discover a great number of persons, who have no faith at all in the word of God.

First, Every man in his natural state before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, has no faith. The Scripture says, God hath shut up all that are in this state in unbelief; and when the Holy Spirit awakens any one of them, he convinces him of sin, and of unbelief in particular. 'When the Comforter is come (says Christ,) he shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not in me.'

Secondly, A man who lives careless in sin has no faith. He does not believe one word that God says in his law. Let it warn him of his guilt, and shew him his great danger, yet he sets at nought the terror of the Lord. He acts as if there was no day of judgment, and no place of eternal torments; he has no fear of God before his eyes. How can such a practical atheist as this have any faith?

Thirdly, The formalist has no true faith. He is content

with the form of godliness, and denies the power of it. The veil of unbelief is upon his heart, and the pride of his own good works is ever before his eyes, that he finds no want of the salvation of Jesus, and is averse to the grace of the gospel. All his hopes arise from what he is in himself, and from what he is able to do for himself: he neither believes God speaking in the law, nor in the gospel: if he believed his word in the law, it would convict him of sin, and forbid him to go about to establish a righteousness of his own: because by the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified: yet this he does not believe. If he believed the word of God in the gospel, it would convince him of righteousness, of an infinitely perfect righteousness, wrought out by the God-man Christ Jesus, and imputed to the sinner without any works of his own; for 'unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is imputed for righteousness.' To this he dare not trust wholly for his acceptance before God, therefore he has not true faith.

Fourthly, A man may be so far enlightened as to understand the way of salvation, and yet have not true faith: this is a possible case. The apostle states it, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. 'Though I understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, yet I may be nothing.' And it is a dangerous case, as Heb. x. 26. 'If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.' Here was such a knowledge of the truth as left a man to perish without the benefit of Christ's sacrifice, therefore he wanted that faith, which whosoever hath shall be saved.

What great numbers are there under these delusions? Reader, art thou one of them? Examine closely; for it is of eternal moment. Prove thine ownself, whether thou be in the faith. If thou askest how thou shalt know it, since there are so many errors about it; hear what God's word says: Whoever believes truly has been first convinced of unbelief. This our Lord teaches, John xvi. 9. 'When the Comforter is come, he will convince the world of sin, because they believe not on me.' He convinces of sin, by enlightening the understanding to know the exceeding sinfulness of it, and by quickening the conscience to feel the guilt of it: he shews the misery threatened, and leaves sinners no false refuge to flee unto: he will not suffer them to sit down content with some sorrow, or a little outward reformation, or any supposed righteousness, but makes them feel that, do whatever they will or can, still their guilt remains. Thus he puts them upon seeking out for sal-

vation, and by the gospel he discovers it to them. He opens their understandings to know what they hear and read concerning the covenant of the eternal Trinity, and concerning what the God-man has done in the fulfilling of this covenant. The Holy Spirit teaches them the nature of the adorable person of Christ-God manifest in the flesh, and the infinitely-precious and everlastingly-meritorious righteousness, which he has wrought out by the obedience of his life and death; and he convinces them, that his righteousness is sufficient for their salvation, and that nothing is required except faith, for its being imputed unto them; and he works in them a sense of their being helpless and without strength to rely upon this righteousness, and through faith in it to have peace with God. He makes them see, that they cannot, by any power of their own, in the least depend upon it; for all their sufficiency is of God. It requires the same arm of the Lord which wrought out this righteousness, to enable them with the heart to believe in it. They are made clearly sensible of this from the word and Spirit of God, and from their own daily experience, and thereby they are disposed to receive their whole salvation from the free grace of God, and to him to ascribe all the glory of it. These are the redeemed of the Lord, to whom it is given to believe. They are quickeded from a death in trespasses and sins, their consciences are awakened, their understandings are enlightened with the knowledge of Christ, they are enabled in their wills to choose him, and in their hearts to love him, and to rejoice in his salvation. This is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit; for faith is his gift, Eph. ii. 8. 'Unto you it is given (says the apostle, Phil. i. 29.,) in the behalf of Christ to believe on him;' none can give it but the Spirit of God: because it is the faith of the operation of God, and requires the same almighty power to believe with the heart, as it did to raise Christ's body from the grave, Eph. i. 20. And this power he puts forth in the preaching of the word, and makes it the power of God unto salvation. The word is called (2 Cor. iii. 8.) the ministration of the Spirit, because by it the Spirit ministers his grace and strength. So Gal. iii. 2. 'Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' It was by hearing faith preached that they received the Spirit: for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, which is therefore called the word of faith. And thus the word is the means, in the hand of the Spirit, to dispose the hearts of those who hear it, to receive and to embrace Christ; whereby they attain the righteousness of faith, as

Rom. x. 10. 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.' The heart is the chief thing in believing: for into it Christ is received, and in it he dwells by faith. The vital union between Christ and the believer is manifested and made known in the heart, and therein it is cemented and established. With joy can the believer say, 'My Beloved is mine, and I am his;' happy for me, we are but one person in the eye of the law, and our interests are but one. Blessed state this! Christ gives himself freely to the believer, who also gives himself up in faith to Christ. Christ as the believer's surety has taken his sins upon himself, and the believer takes Christ's righteousness: for Christ makes over all that he has to the believer, who by faith looks upon it and makes use of it as his own: according to that express warrant for his so doing in 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. All things are yours, because ye belong to Christ.

This vital union, between Christ and the believer is largely treated of in Scripture. Christ thus speaks of it in his prayer for his people, John xvii. 'I pray for them who shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.' And in John iv. 56, he says, 'He, that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him;' and this indwelling is by faith, as Eph. iii. 17. 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' And it is the office of the Holy Spirit to manifest this union to their hearts, as John xiv. 20. 'At that day, when the Spirit of truth is come, ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.' And besides these, and many other plain words, this union is also represented by several striking images; such as that of husband and wife, who are in law but one person, the husband being answerable for the wife's debts, and the wife sharing in the husband's honours and goods. It is set forth by the union between a building and the foundation upon which it stands secure: between a tree and its branches; which live because they are in the tree, and grow by the sap which they receive from it: between the head and the members, which by holding under the head live and grow, having a supply of nourishment administered to every part. Under these beautiful images the Scripture sets forth the reality and the blessed fruits of this union. The Holy Spirit makes it known to the believer, by enabling him to rely upon God's word, as infallible truth, and to receive Christ's person as the almighty Saviour; and he strengthens it, by enabling the believer to make use of

Christ's fulness, and to live by faith upon him in all his offices, for the partaking of all his promised graces and blessings.

That faith which is of the operation of God always produces the knowledge and the fruits of this blessed union, and enables the soul to give itself up to Christ, that it may be one with him, not in a figurative metaphorical way, but as really and truly as the building is one with the foundation, as much one in interest as husband and wife; one in influence, as the root and the branches, the head and the members. So that this is not an empty notion about Christ, or some clear knowledge of him, or a mere approving of his way of salvation; but it is an actual receiving of him into the heart for righteousness to justify, and to dwell and reign there to sanctify: a receiving him as a perfect Saviour, and living upon him in his fulness; waiting upon him to be taught daily; trusting wholly for acceptance in his blood and righteousness; resting, relying, leaning upon his promised strength to hold out unto the end; and hoping for eternal life as the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The saving faith thus receives Christ, and thus lives upon Christ.

Now, reader, examine and prove thyself, whether thou hast this faith. Dost thou believe with thy heart unto righteousness? Thou canst not live upon Christ, unless thou art first in Christ. Thou must be first persuaded of thine interest in him before thou canst make use of it; and improve it; and therefore the knowledge of thy union with him must be clear and plain, before thou canst have a free and open communion with him. There must be faith, before there can be the fruits of faith; and strong faith, before there can be much and ripe fruit. Little faith will receive but little from Christ. The weak believer is full of doubts and fears, and, when he wants comfort or strength, or any other things which Christ has promised to give his people, he is questioning whether he has any right to expect them; and therefore he does not receive them, because he has not boldness and access with confidence to God by faith in Christ Jesus. From hence appears the necessity of being established in the faith. The believer must have clear evidence of his interest in Christ, before he can live comfortably and happy upon Christ: therefore he must look well to the foundation, and see there be no doubts left about his being settled upon it. Christ being the sure foundation, how can he safely build thereon all his salvation, unless he be first satisfied that he is upon it? The peace with God in his conscience, every act of spiritual life, and the whole walk and

well ordering of his conversation, depend upon the settling of this point. It ought to be finally determined, and brought to this issue:—Christ is mine, I know it from the word of God. I have the witness of the Spirit of God, and Christ allows me, unworthy as I am, to make use of him, and of his fulness, for the supply of all my needs; and I find I do make use of him, and thereby I know, from daily experience, that I am in him, because I live upon him. According as this point is settled, so in proportion will be the life of faith. If the believer be thoroughly grounded in it without any doubt or fear, then he may, and will with confidence, improve his interest in Christ; but if he still leave it in suspense, his faith can be but little, and therefore he will obtain little comfort or strength from Christ.

Reader, art thou one of the weak in faith? Dost thou feel it? dost thou mourn for it? and dost thou know, from whence thy faith is to be strengthened? Who can increase it, but he alone who gives it? O pray then to the Lord God to give thee the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that the eyes of thy understanding may be enlightened to see the infinite sufficiency of Christ's person, as God-man, and the everlasting merit of his life and death to save his people from their sins: and whatever hinders thee from seeing the fulness of Christ's salvation, and resting comfortably by faith upon it, earnestly entreat the Lord to remove it. If it be sin, beg of God to make thee more willing to part with it: if it be guilt, pray him to ordain peace in thy conscience through the blood of sprinkling: if it be much corruption, it cannot be subdued until it be first pardoned: if thou hast got under the spirit of bondage, look up to the Lord Christ for that liberty, wherewith he makes his people free. Whatever it be, as soon as it is discovered to thee, make use of prayer, believing God's word of faithfulness; that what thou askest thou shalt have, and that he will so establish thee, that thou shalt go on from faith to faith. May it be thy happy case. *Amen.*

Reader, if thou art an awakened man, convinced of sin by the word and Spirit of God, all thine enemies will try to keep thee from the clear knowledge of thy union with Christ. The reason is plain; because then thou wilt not be able to depend upon Christ's promised strength, and to make use of it by faith, which is almighty to defeat them all. Hearken not therefore to any suggestion, nor be afraid of any opposition, which would hinder thee from seeking to be fully convinced of thine interest in Christ, and of thy being a branch in the

true vine. Satan will use all his wiles and fiery darts, and all carnal professors will be on his side, and they will have close allies in thine own breast—in thine unbelief, in thy legal spirit, and in thy lusts and corruptions. Consider, why do these enemies fight so hard against thy being safely settled, and comfortably grounded upon Christ by living faith? Is it not, because thou wilt then be an overmatch for them, through the strength of Jesus? and does not this plainly shew the absolute necessity of knowing, that Christ and thou art one? Till this be known, thou wilt be afraid to apply to him and to make use of his strength; and, till thou dost use it, all thine enemies will triumph over thee. O beg of God then to increase thy faith, that thou mayest be fully convinced of thy union with Christ, and mayest live in him safe, and on him happy. Hear and read his word, and pray for the effectual working of the Lord the Spirit in it, and by it, that faith may come and grow by hearing, until it be finally settled without doubt or wavering, that Christ is thine, and thou art his.

After the believer is thus grounded and established in the knowledge of his union with Christ, it behoves him then to inquire, what God has given him a right to in consequence of this union: and the Scripture will inform him, that in the covenant of grace it has pleased the Father, that all fulness should dwell in his Son, as the head, for these of his members. He has it to supply all their need: they cannot possibly want any thing, but it is treasured up for them in his infinite fulness; there they may have it, grace for grace, every moment as their occasions require, and they have it in no other way, and by no other hand, than faith, trusting the word of promise, and relying upon Christ's faithfulness and power to fulfil it: as it is written, 'The just shall live by his faith,' Hab. ii. 3. Having received justification to life by faith in the righteousness of Christ, he depends on Christ to keep him alive, and makes use of Christ's fulness for all the wants of that spiritual life, which he has given. He trusts him for them all, and lives upon him by faith for the continual receiving of them all, and according to his faith so is it done unto him.

Let this be well weighed and considered, that the justified person lives and performs every act of spiritual life by faith. This is a very important lesson, and therefore it is taught in Scripture as plainly as words can speak. Every thing is promised to, and is received by, faith. Thus it is said, 'Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and if

children, then heirs according to the promise, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and holiness;' made for their use wisdom to teach them, righteousness to justify them, and holiness to sanctify them; yea, he has all things in his fulness for their use, as the free grant speaks, 1 Cor. iii. 21, &c. 'All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' Consider, believer, what a large estate this is; thy title to it is good, and thou enterest into possession by faith. See then that thou make use of thine inheritance, and live upon it. Do not say, when thou wantest any thing, I know not where to get it: for whatever the God-man has of wisdom, righteousness, holiness, power, and glory, he has it, as the head of the body, for thee as one of his members, for thy use and benefit, and he has promised it to thee in his word. Make free with him then: go to him with confidence. Thou canst not do him greater honour than to receive from him what he has to give: that is glorifying him. It is putting the crown upon his head, and confessing him to be a perfect all-sufficient Christ, when it pleaseth thee, as it did his Father, that in him should all fulness dwell, and when thou art content to live out of thyself upon his fulness, for the supply of all thy needs in time and in eternity. To live upon him is his glory, and it is thy privilege, thy interest, and thy happiness. In every state, spiritual and temporal, and in every circumstance, thou canst possibly be in, thou art commanded to look up to Christ, that thou mayest receive out of his fulness, and to depend upon him to save thee from every evil, and to bestow upon thee every good. In thy walk heavenward, and in every thing thou meetest with by the way, put thy trust in Christ, and expect from him the fulfilling of all his promises: he has all power in heaven and earth for that very purpose. Still rely upon him, and cast thy burdens on him, when thou art tempted, when old corruptions arise, when the world and the devil assault thee, when under a sense of weakness and dulness in duty, when in darkness and desertion, in persecution and trouble, in pain and poverty, in sickness and death: this is the life of faith. Thou wilt live like a Christian indeed, if being in any of these cases, thou believest that Christ is able, because he is almighty, and willing, because he has promised to supply thy wants, and then canst trust in him for that supply. Depend upon it, thou shalt have it, and it shall be done unto thee according to thy word.

After the believer is become one with Christ, and through him has a right to all the riches of grace, and may by faith make use of them as his own, why is he so long in learning this lesson perfectly? Being adopted into the heavenly family, and an heir of the heavenly inheritance, why does not he immediately live up to his privilege, and to his estate? His title is good; the inheritance is sure: all things are become his; for all fulness is in Christ, and, by virtue of his union with Christ, this fulness is his, and he may by faith be always receiving out of it every grace and blessing, which Christ has promised: why then does not he at once attain to this happy life of faith? Sad experience proves that young believers do not. They meet with so many difficulties, that they grow up slowly into Christ in all things: they do not attain to a solid establishment in the faith in a day: enemies without and within stop their progress, insomuch that they often continue little children for a long time. They have the same right to Christ, the same privileges, and the same promised grace, which young men and fathers in Christ have; but they have not learned by experience how to improve their interest in him, and to make the most of it. The difficulties and temptations, which weaken their hold of Christ, and stay their growth in him, are many: some of the chief are these:

1. They continue little children, and weak in faith, because they do not presently attain a solid acquaintance with the person of Christ, and are not thoroughly satisfied, how able he was and sufficient for every thing he undertook, and how perfectly he has finished every part of his work.

2. This keeps them ignorant of many things in which the glory of his salvation consists; hence they have not clear believing views of its fulness and its freeness.

3. By which means they labour under many doubts about the manner of their receiving this salvation. A legal spirit working with their unbelief puts them upon reasoning continually against being saved freely by grace through faith; and,

4. These legal unbelieving reasonings gain great power from their unskilfulness in their warfare between nature and grace, the old man and the new, the flesh and the Spirit; and,

5. All these difficulties are mightily strengthened from their hearkening to sense, and trusting to its reports more than to the word of God. While believers are under these difficulties, their faith meets with many checks in its growth, and, until they be enabled to overcome them, they continue to be little children in Christ. Their weak faith receives but little from

Christ, and it continues weak, because they have but little dependence upon the effectual working of Christ's mighty power. The exceeding greatness of his power is able to strengthen them, and he has promised it, but they dare not trust him. Consider, therefore, reader, if thou art one of these babes, why thou dost not grow up faster into Christ. The

First thing that stops thee is the ignorance which is in thy mind about his person, and the prejudice against him, which is in thy carnal heart. These are in all men by nature: and these Satan will work upon, in order to hinder the increase of thy faith. He will use all his cunning, and his power, to keep thee from growing in that knowledge of Christ, which is eternal life. He will inject into thy heart blasphemous thoughts against his godhead, and, when thou art reading in Scripture, or hearing about his being God manifest in the flesh, he will try to puzzle and perplex thy imagination with a How can these things be? He will represent the union of the two natures in Christ as a thing not to be understood, and as if they, who believed it with the clearest evidence of God's word and Spirit, had only some fancy about it. He has an old grudge against Christ, and will not scruple to tell any lies of him. He was a liar from the beginning, and abode not in the truth. Regard him not. Mind what the word of truth says, and pray that thou mayest understand it: for the more thou knowest of the Lord Christ, that blessed God-man, the more wilt thou be settled, and established in him. It is written of him, first, that he is God, true and very God, in the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, a person coequal, and coeternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, Isa. ix. 6. Unto us a child is born, who is the mighty God: secondly, that he is Jehovah, which signifies the self-existent essence, Isa. xliii. 11. 'I, even I, am Jehovah, and beside me there is no Saviour;' from whence it is evident, that the Saviour is Jehovah, and that he exists in a manner independent of, and distinct from, all other beings and things. St. Jude makes the opposition to this fundamental truth the condemning sin of certain heretics, who denied Jesus Christ to be the only Lord God, and our Lord. In the covenant of grace this divine person undertook to be made man. He, who was true and very God, was made true and very man; he had a reasonable soul and human flesh, and was in all points like other men, sin excepted: and, as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ. This is the glorious person, who undertook in the covenant of grace to be man's surety: St. Paul calls him

the Surety of the New Testament; and what could there be wanting in him for this high office? He is every way qualified to be the surety for man, who is himself true and very man, who is also God as well as man, and therefore has all the perfections of Jehovah, to render what he did and suffered as man's surety infinitely and everlastingly meritorious.

This is the blessed object of faith, God and man united in one Christ. Consider then, reader, what Scripture says of his wonderful person, in order that thy faith in him may be established. That very self-existent God, who spake, and all things were made, who commanded, and they stand fast to this very hour, was made flesh. He came to be the surety for his people, to obey and suffer in their stead. What could not his almighty power effect? Is any thing too hard for the Lord God? What obedience can his Father's law demand, which he is not infinitely able to pay? What sufferings can satisfy his Father's justice, which he is not absolutley qualified to endure? for he has every perfection and attribute equal with the Father. On this truth thou must rest: and is it not a sure foundation? In the certainty of it thou must seek to be more grounded every day: because, as thou growest in the knowledge of his divine person, thou wilt become more satisfied of his infinite sufficiency to save: and, fully convinced of this, thou wilt be enabled from Scripture to answer and silence thine own unbelieving thoughts, and to reject the blasphemous suggestions of Satan against the Lord Christ. Observe, then, that he is God, and that he is Jehovah. Read and meditate on what Scripture says of his godhead, and pray that thou mayest be taught of God to understand it: for no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. It is his office to glorify Jesus, by enabling thee to believe him to be Lord and God, and to call him thy Lord and thy God, and to prove he is so, by thy humble dependence upon him, for every blessing both in time and in eternity.

It is much to be lamented, that believers in general take so little pains to get a clear knowledge of the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity: for want of which their faith is unsettled, and they are liable to many errors both in judgment and practice. I would therefore most earnestly recommend it to all that are weak in faith, to be diligent in hearing and reading what in Scripture is revealed concerning the Trinity in unity, looking up always for the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit, and I would direct them to a form of sound words in the Common Prayer Book for Trinity Sunday, which contains the shortest

and best account of the subject that I ever saw. 'It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord Almighty, everlasting God; who art one God, one Lord, not one only person, but three persons in one substance: for that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality.' These are precious words. Meditate, reader, upon them, and entreat the Holy Spirit to enlighten thine understanding with the saving knowledge of them, that, being established in the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity and of the godhead of the Lord Christ, thou mayest be enabled to overcome the difficulties which arise.

Secondly, from thy not being well acquainted with the nature of Christ's salvation. Concerning which young believers are very apt to have many doubts. Carnal reason is strong in them. The spirit of bondage resists with many and mighty arguments, and unbelief musters up all its forces, and there is a long and obstinate fight against being saved freely and fully by the grace of God Jesus. But the arguments which God has provided in his word, when applied by his Spirit, will prevail and overcome. Meditate upon them for the establishing of thy weak faith. Consider, first, the covenant. Salvation is not a thing of chance, or left to man's will or power, but it was contrived by the blessed Trinity in the covenant of grace, and every thing belonging to it was perfectly settled. It is said to be (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.) an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. O thou of little faith, why then dost thou doubt? What! doubt of God's love? Here's a covenant springing from his mere love, and from everlasting. Doubt of its being well contrived? infinite wisdom orders it in all things. Doubt of its being well executed? it is in all things sure, sure as God's almighty power and faithfulness can make it. What motives are here for the strengthening of thy faith! May the Lord render them effectual.

Reflect, secondly, upon the undertakings of the Lord Christ, the surety of this covenant. There was nothing left out of this covenant; it was ordered in all things belonging to salvation, and Christ undertook to perform all things on the part of his Father, that his law might be magnified, and his justice made honourable and glorious; and, on the part of the sinner, that he might be saved from all evil, and entitled to all good; and, being God and man united in one Christ, he was

a proper surety to reconcile God to man, and to reconcile man to God. May these things then sink deep into thy heart, that thy surety has undertaken the whole of thy salvation, to do all for thee, and all in thee, and all by thee. What canst thou desire more for the settling of thy faith?

3. Perhaps thou wilt say, his undertakings were great, but has he fulfilled them? Yes, and so perfectly, that he is able to save to the uttermost. He was called Jesus, because he was to save his people from their sins; as their surety he was to fulfil the law for them by his obedience, and to suffer the pains and penalties of it by his death and passion. Accordingly in the fulness of time he was manifest in the flesh, and came to do the will of his Father: of his obedience to that will he thus speaks: 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' Of his suffering that will he said with his last breath, 'It is finished.' Observe, whatever he undertook to do in his life and death was finished, and it was demonstrated that as man's surety he had done and suffered every thing ordered in the covenant, by his resurrection from the dead: for then did the Father declare him to be the Son of God with power. Will this not satisfy thee, O thou of little faith? Here is one more cause of thy doubting removed; thou canst not deny but Christ has finished every thing he undertook, and in consequence thereof he has all power in heaven and earth to bestow a full and finished salvation. What canst thou now object?

4. Does a thought arise in thy heart—It is finished, but is it so freely given that such an unworthy creature, as I am, may partake of it? Yes: it comes to thee in the way of a free gift. Great, inestimable, and eternal, as it is, yet it is all thine in receiving. Not he who worketh, but he who believeth, is justified from all things. It is by faith that believers are justified and sanctified, are strengthened and comforted in their walk; by faith they fight against all their enemies, and by faith they conquer, and lay hold of eternal life: and therefore, it is of faith, that it might be by grace. Salvation is wrought out and finished by thy Surety, given to thee freely, continued with all its blessings in time and through eternity, as a free gift, to the praise of the glory of free grace. Why therefore art thou discouraged? Hast thou nothing to buy with? Then obey the Lord's command, come and buy free salvation, without money and without price. How should this motive still add to the establishment of thy faith? For there thou seest whatever thou wantest is thine by believing. Thou mayest have it freely

by grace. It is treasured up for thee in the fulness of thy dear Saviour, and thou canst not honour him more, than to make free use of it. What dost thou say to this? hast thou any thing to object; canst thou find any fault with the covenant of grace, or with the undertakings of the God-man in it? no, certainly, the covenant was well ordered in all things and sure; and what the Surety of the covenant undertook he has perfectly fulfilled. Salvation is finished on his part. He has glorified the law by his infinitely-perfect obedience, he has made divine justice honourable by his sufferings and death, he has brought in everlasting righteousness for his people, and will bring them to everlasting glory: for he has already taken possession of it for them as the head of his body the church, and he has all power in heaven and earth to save them day by day, until he make them partakers of his eternal salvation. What can thy heart wish for more than such a Saviour, and such a salvation? O! be not faithless, then, but believing; and, if thou hast any doubts left, endeavour to have them cleared up by reading, and prayer, until thy faith be perfectly settled on the divinity of God thy Saviour, and the infinite sufficiency of his salvation. These two points lay at the very foundation of the Christian religion: they must be supposed in all its principles, and built upon in all its practice; therefore, being of universal influence, if they be thoroughly established, thy faith will be steadfast, and thy life well ordered and comfortable. Examine, then, and prove thyself here before thou readest any farther. Dost thou believe Christ to be true and very God, in every perfection and attribute equal with the Father? and is his a full and a free salvation? All the following directions depend upon, and can only profit thee, so far as thou believest these two points. Look well then to thy establishment in them. If it be strong, the life of faith will be steady and prosperous; but, if it be weak, will be liable to be tost about continually with errors, and overcome with temptations; especially with those, to which a legal spirit will expose thee, as I purposed to shew under the

Third general head, in which is to be considered, how the little children in Christ, for want of being established in the belief of his godhead, and of his full and free salvation, labour under many doubts, a legal spirit working with their unbelief puts them upon reasoning continually against being saved freely by grace through faith.

He is of a legal spirit, who is under the law, and apprehends himself bound to keep it, as the condition of life, requiring of

him, do this and thou shalt live. In his understanding he sees this, and no other way to life, in his will he is continually inclined to it, and in his heart he loves it; because he fancies it is in his own power to attain life in this way, and he can merit it by his own works, which mightily gratifies his self-love, and indulges his pride. This legal spirit reigns over all men in their natural state, but does not discover its tyranny, until it be opposed; and then so soon as the soul is quickened from a death in trespasses and sins, it begins to fight, trying to keep the poor sinner in bondage by its legal workings and strivings, and putting him upon seeking for some good disposition or qualification in himself, on account of which God should love him. Thus the awakened soul, under the spirit of bondage, always seeks deliverance by the works of that law, which can do nothing more than bring him to the knowledge of sin, discover to him the exceeding sinfulness of it, and the exceeding great punishment which it deserves; by which means it is always nourishing the doubts and fears of unbelief. And after the Lord has in a measure removed them by a clear discovery of the salvation that is in Jesus, and by the gift of faith, yet still this legal spirit will be trying to bring the soul into bondage again to fear, and it too often prevails. Young believers find it the worst enemy they have to deal with: it is a sly, subtle foe, that seems to intend them a kindness, while it is always on the side of their greatest enemy: it would appear to them to be actuated by a zeal for God, but it is to eclipse the glory of the Lord Christ, to take away the all-sufficiency of his salvation, and to rob them of their great joy and peace in believing.

If any one should ask, how this legal spirit comes to have such power over mankind? the Scripture informs us,

First, That all men, being God's creatures, are under the law to him, bound to keep it, or bound if they transgress to suffer the threatened pains and penalties: in this state man was created, and in it all men are by nature, and therefore there is in us all a continual leaning to the law, and a desire to attain righteousness by the works of it. We are all wedded to this way of gaining God's favour. The apostle says, there is a marriage union between us and the law, and it, like a husband, has dominion over us as long as it liveth; so that we cannot be married to Christ, until that be dead wherein we were held. You may see this in the Jews. How does Moses labour to bring them off from an opinion of their own righteousness! and a greater than Moses has

done the same in his discourses against the scribes and pharisees; yea, the apostles of our Lord were forced to write and preach against this leaning to the law, it gave such disturbance to the true disciples of Christ; and, notwithstanding the Scripture arguments against it, yet we have great numbers among us, who seek for a justifying righteousness by the works of the law: and they are put upon seeking this,

Secondly, From their ignorance of the law. They are not acquainted with its nature; for it demands what they cannot pay. It insists upon an obedience, spiritual, perfect, and uninterrupted: for the least offence, if but in thought, it comes with its fearful sentence, 'Cursed is every one, who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.' On him who does not continue in all things, and not one man ever did, this sentence takes place, and, if he was to live a thousand years, he could not do any thing to repeal it. The law will always be to him the ministration of condemnation, and the ministration of death, and that is all it can do for him. It provides no remedy, and gives him no hope, but leaves him condemned to the first and to the second death; and yet, such is the blindness of the sinner, that he will be still leaning to the law, and afraid to trust wholly to the righteousness of Christ; and this arises,

Thirdly, From his ignorance of Christ's righteousness, which is infinitely perfect, and wants no works of the law to be joined with it in the justifying of a sinner, because it is the righteousness of God, wrought out by the God-man for his people, and it is the righteousness of faith—they receive it by faith without works; so that it is directly opposite to the righteousness of a legal spirit. Hence we have many among us, great professors too, who are ignorant of God's righteousness; they have not been entirely brought off from a legal bottom, and therefore they talk of being justified without a justifying righteousness, which if God was to do, he would be unrighteous, and which as he has declared he will not do, their fancied justification leaves them still in their sins. They dare not put their whole trust and confidence in the righteousness of Christ imputed unto sinners, and made theirs by faith: they have many fears about imputed righteousness, although the apostle has not scrupled to mention it eleven times in one chapter (Rom. iv.;) and these fears make them read the Scripture with such prejudice, that they say they cannot find the expression *faith in the righteousness of Christ* in all the Bible. They may find the sense of the expression in Moses,

and in all the prophets, and the very words in 2 Pet. i. 1. 'Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them who have obtained like precious faith with us (in the Greek is *eis*) in the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' Here is faith in the righteousness of Christ, with several glorious titles to recommend it, namely, it is the righteousness of God, of God our Saviour, of Jesus Christ. From whence can men's opposition to this way of justification arise, but from their not being convinced by the Spirit of God of the necessity of Christ's righteousness? It is his peculiar office to convince of this truth: no teaching but his can do it. O that he may do it in the hearts of those, who, out of a zeal for God, though not according to knowledge, eclipse the glory of the Lord, and rob afflicted consciences of their comfort by opposing imputed righteousness! It is a righteousness of so high and heavenly a nature, wrought out by another, and so wonderful a person; is bestowed as a free gift upon the chief of sinners, whereby alone they obtain remission of their sins, and are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven; and they receive it by faith only, without works, which a legal spirit always wants to mix with it, that no one could ever believe in it, unless it were given him from above. May it be given to those professors, who cannot yet submit to the righteousness of Christ, to see their want of it, and with the heart to believe in it unto salvation!

Reader, hast thou not found what an enemy this legal spirit is to thy peace and joy, and how it is always inclining thee to some self-righteousness through thy ignorance of the righteousness of the law, and of the righteousness of faith? and wouldst thou gladly be delivered from it? Know, then, that nothing can subdue it, but the bringing into thy conscience a better hope from a better righteousness than that of the law, and, when thou art enabled to plead it there against all the charges of sin and Satan, then thou wilt stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made thee free. His is a better righteousness; it is infinitely perfect and everlasting, even the righteousness of God! By faith in this righteousness thou shalt be saved from the law, and shall receive remission of sins; through it the Father doth accept thee and give thee the Spirit of his Son, to lead and comfort and sanctify thee, he doth love thee and bless thee, as his dear child, making all things work together under him for thy good, and keeping thee by his mighty power through faith unto salvation: so that in and on account of this righteousness thou shalt be saved from all the evils of sin,

and receive all spiritual blessings in earth and heaven; and this thou shalt have freely, without any merit or work of the law; for this righteousness comes wholly by grace, and is for thee a sinner, as such, and is to justify thee from the condemnation of the law, to turn its curses into blessings, and its threatened punishments into happiness: and this it can do for thee perfectly and everlastingly; so that being found in this righteousness, there is no grace promised in time, or glory in eternity, but it shall be thine. The Lord God promises them to thee in the fullest and freest manner; to thee, without any exception or limitation, being a sinner and ungodly, though one of the vilest and basest; yet to thee, as such, is the word of this salvation sent: and it will be all thine in the comfortable enjoyment of it, through believing. Thou art to bring nothing to recommend thee, but that thou art a sensible sinner, and thy right and title to a finished salvation is clear from the warrant of God's word, when thou believest with thy heart in the righteousness of Christ. The divine command is, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ:' the promise is, Whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but shall receive remission of sins, shall be justified from all things, shall have everlasting life. Why then dost thou disquiet thyself about attaining the righteousness of the law, and thereby suffer the law to disturb the peace of thy conscience, since thou hast a far better righteousness, which ought to reign there, even the righteousness which is of God by faith? for thou art a believer, and, although a weak one, yet thou hast as good a title to Christ and his righteousness as the strongest believer in the world: because thy right comes from the free grant of the word of grace, and is apprehended by faith, by which all things are become thine. Thou art an heir of them all by faith in Christ Jesus. O, thou of little faith, why then dost thou doubt? Remember how highly thou dishonourest the infinite love and free salvation of Jesus, and how much thou robbest thy own soul of its peace and its growth in grace, by thy weak and little faith. Think upon these things, and entreat the author and finisher of the faith to strengthen it in thy soul.

But, perhaps, thou wilt say, How shall I so live upon Christ with my weak faith that it may grow stronger, and I may get the better of my legal spirit? Here is the remedy; may it be to thee effectual! The Scripture directs thee to look at Christ God-man as thy surety, who for thee has wrought out a finished salvation, and whatever he has promised in his word relating to this salvation, thou art to trust him for the making of

it good, and to depend upon his faithfulness and power to make it good to thee. Whatever therefore he has done and suffered, to save thee from the curse of the law, and from the spirit of bondage, and to make thee free with the liberty of the children of God, thou art to live upon him for these blessings, and by faith to be always receiving them from him in the fullest and largest measure, that he promises them to thee. Look not into thyself then for any qualification, but look unto Jesus; that thou mayest experience more of that liberty wherewith he hath made thee free, and mayest be no longer a babe, unskilful in the word of righteousness. Hear what he says; 'if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed,' free from the law of sin and death, free from condemnation at the bar of God; and, being freed from the bondage of corruption, ye shall be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. This is the freedom which God promises thee; it is very extensive, has many noble privileges and vast blessings. By faith all is thine. See how perfectly believers have received all, and may thy faith be like theirs. Rom. viii. 15, &c. 'Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we pray, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness to our spirits, that we are the children of God, and if children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.' Observe what is here said of the believing Romans, and by faith thou shalt experience the same, as perfectly as they did.

1. They were freed from the spirit of bondage, under which they once had laboured:

2. They were so freed as to be under it no more; they were not to fear again as heretofore; for,

3. They had received the spirit of adoption, and he gave them the evidence of their sonship. Upon which,

4. They believed God was their reconciled Father, and they had boldness and access to him with confidence. And, therefore,

5. They lived in light, and walked in love, like his children and heirs, who were to abide in his house for ever.

See also what great freedom the Galatians had, chap. iv. 4, &c. 'God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons: and, because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father: wherefore thou art no

more a servant, but a son, and, if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.' O what treasures of grace and consolation are there in this scripture, tending to subdue thy legal spirit. Consider some of them.

1. All men having broken the law, and being under the curse of it, Christ was made under the law, that the law might reach him as the surety of his people; accordingly,

2. By his obedience to the precepts, and by his suffering the penalties of the law, he redeemed his people, who were under the law; so that,

3. They are no longer in bondage to it; but, being made free, and having received the adoption of sons,

4. They have the Spirit of liberty sent into their hearts to witness to them, that Christ fulfilled the law for them; and,

5. That the Father loves them, as his dear children, and they love him and serve him without fear, crying to him, Abba, Father:

6. Wherefore, they are no longer servants in bondage to any one, but are made free indeed, being now the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And,

7. If sons, then heirs of God, and free to inherit whatever he has promised to give his children in earth and heaven.

These and many more arguments are contained in this one Scripture, tending to subdue thy legal spirit, and to bring thee to live more comfortably by faith upon Christ, who as thy surety has fully kept the law for thee in his life and death. Thou art to consider thyself now, not under the law, but under grace, and therefore absolutely free from the condemning power of the law. This thou must maintain against all the carnal reasonings of thy legal spirit—Christ is my law-fulfiller. And thou wilt glorify him for redeeming thee from under the law, and wilt live in sweet peace in thine own conscience, while thou keepest fast hold of this most blessed and eternally-precious truth. May all thy reading and prayer, and the use of all means, help thee to grow in knowledge and experience of it!

There is a very strong bias and leaning in weak believers to a legal spirit, which ought to make them read such promises as I have been mentioning over and over again, that God may thereby encourage them to maintain the liberty which he hath given them in Christ Jesus, and to stand fast in it against the fresh attacks of the devil and unbelief: they should be always jealous over themselves, and watchful against their enemies; because, after they have, in a truly gospel and evangelical

way, through grace, got their legal spirit subdued, yet if it be not in the same way kept subdued, it will break out with more power than ever, and will be likely to bring them into bondage again to fear: and this may, and I have known it often happen, after they had obtained some great victories over it, and finding it not stir for some time, they flattered themselves they should have but little trouble with it any more: thus they were drawn off their guard, which gave room to their legal spirit to exert itself again with vigour. This surprised the weak believers, put them upon reasoning and doubting, whether all had been right with them before; and so at the very time when they should have taken the shield of faith, and should have been making use of it, they were questioning whether they had any, which left them unarmed in the midst of their enemies, an easy prey to every temptation: but an invisible power kept them safe, although they were not comfortable in themselves.

For the encouragement of persons in this case, that they may presently recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, they should observe,

1. What the Scripture says of a legal spirit, describing it to be one of the members of their corrupt nature, one of the affections of the flesh, which will never be quite dead, while the breath is in their bodies. It is an enemy that will be always fighting against the Holy Spirit; for they are directly contrary the one to the other: and therefore, believers must not dream of any such victory as leaves no more fighting, but must expect sharp battles with their legal spirit as long as ever they live. And,

Secondly, the same means by which they formerly obtained victory must be made use of again. As often as the legal spirit is tempting, Christ's strength must be opposed to it, and his strength must be brought into the soul by faith in his righteousness, as it is written, Isa. xlii. 24. 'Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' Righteousness comes first, and is established in the conscience, that it may be pleaded and maitained there against all the charges and accusations of the law; and as often as these rise afresh, still they must be answered and silenced with this plea—In the Lord Christ have I righteousness; he is my law-fulfiller, and I depend upon his promised strength to make me stand fast in that liberty wherewith he hath made me free. And the soul must not only thus quiet and stay itself by faith upon the righteousness and strength of Christ for victory over the present temptation, but must also,

Thirdly, Continually do this; because there is in our nature a continual opposition to it: the experience of which is the believer's safety. The abiding sense of his being naturally inclined to lean to legal dependences, and therefore his want of Christ every moment to justify him by his righteousness, and to keep him by his strength, will be the surest way to prevent his falling into bondage: for this will keep him very jealous over himself, and will show him the necessity of living out of himself for righteousness and strength; and, while he liveth upon Christ by these for faith, he shall not be overcome by any enemy.

The glory of the incarnate God, and his infinite sufficiency to save, have not a greater enemy than a legal spirit, and therefore I have enlarged upon this point, that believers might be convinced, from the word of God, they were saved from the condemnation of the law. They will never live comfortably till they see the law dead and buried, and then willingly give up themselves to be espoused to Christ, who will make them free indeed: and when they have learned of him to enjoy and walk in their Christian liberty, then they will be better acquainted with the warfare between nature and grace, the old man and the new, the flesh and the Spirit, which warfare is the

Fourth great hinderance, that stops the growth of faith in weak believers. They are unskilful in it, soon tired of it, and often likely to be defeated: they do not enter into the battle strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; nor are they certain if they fall in battle they shall be saved with an eternal salvation. These are great discouragements, and, until these be removed, they cannot fight the good fight of faith, like good soldiers of Christ Jesus.

The case is thus. There is in every believer an old man and a new man, nature and grace, flesh and Spirit, and these are opposite and contrary the one to the other in their principles and actions: they are always desiring different things, and pursuing different ends, which occasions a continual war between them. The flesh lusteth always against the Spirit, and has many and mighty allies on its side, armies of lusts, the faculties of soul and body to bring forth sin, hosts of fallen angels, and all the world that lieth in wickedness. But the new man, renewed in the spirit of his mind, has a reconciled God on his side, and therefore he need not fear what any enemy can do unto him; but may bravely face the stoutest of them, even death itself, relying upon that word of promise,

'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' Here is the believer's encouragement to fight—his God will never leave him. Here he obtains victory every day—his God never forsakes him: and, after he has fought the good fight of faith, his God and Saviour will make him more than conqueror; he will send death to kill sin: and then the believer will never more have temptation from it, or sorrow about it. But, till that happy time come, he must be fighting against his corrupt nature and all its allies. No peace can be made with them, not even a truce. He must expect no kind of favour from them; because they are God's irreconcileable enemies; and therefore, as long as he is in the world, he must be fighting against the world; as long as he has a body of flesh, he must oppose it with its affections and lusts, because they war against the soul; and as long as he is in the reach of temptation he must oppose the tempter, steadfast in the faith, never putting off his armour, until the Lord give him a discharge.

The believer's peace within, and victory without, are closely connected with the clear understanding of this case; and, although I have stated it from the word of God, and agreeably to the sense in which the church of God has always interpreted it, yet for its more full confirmation some testimonies must be brought, which speak to the very point—first, to the believer's having in him an old man and a new; secondly, that these two are at war; and thirdly, that they fight together till death.

First, The apostle says to the saints at Ephesus, chap. iv. 22, &c. 'put off the old man, put on the new.' Mind, the same persons had both in them an old man, corrupt according to his deceitful lusts, daily to be put off, and a new man to be put on, and renewed day by day in the spirit of his mind. The old man is described to have a body of sin, with all his members, his affections and lusts; these must not be obeyed, but mortified. 'Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members, as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin,' Rom. vi. 12, 13. The saints at Rome had sin in them, and it wanted to reign as it had done heretofore in the lusts thereof; but,

Secondly, They were not to obey them. There was in them a new man, who was to fight against those fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.'

Gal. v. 17. Here is battle between two—the flesh, the whole nature of the old man; and the Spirit, the new man born again of the Spirit: the cause of it is, the one wills what the other hates, each wants to carry his own will into execution, and these being contrary the one to the other, they fight for mastery; in the battle the flesh, the old man, is defeated, and the Spirit working in the new man conquers; and this lusting and fighting is in one and the same person—in him who is said to be not under the law, to be led by the Spirit, and to live and to walk in the Spirit. In Rom. viii. 7. the apostle calls the flesh the carnal mind, and he says, 'It is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;' since it is enmity itself there is no reconciling it; it will not, nay it cannot, obey God, but is ever lusting and rebelling against his law. The nature of the battle is described at length in Rom. vii. The chapter consists of three parts: first, the believer's liberty from the law to ver. 6. Secondly, he answers some objections made against the law from its nature and properties, and that in his own person, because it had been the means of bringing him to the right knowledge of sin, ver. 7. and sin, being discovered by the law, through the corruption of nature, raged and rebelled the more in him, ver. 8. and the law had made him sensible of God's anger against sin, and of his deserving death and hell for it, ver. 9 to 14: and from thence to the end of the chapter he describes the conflict between the old man and the new; the one consenting to the law, and the other resisting the law. In this conflict there were three sharp attacks; in the first he found in himself two contrary principles of action always resisting each other, the old man fighting against the new, from ver. 14 to 18. Secondly, when the will of the new man was good, through the opposition of the old man, it had not the desired effect, ver. 19, 20; and, thirdly, he felt in himself two contrary laws, both requiring obedience, the law of the members warring and rebelling against the law of God written in the renewed mind: for no sooner did his mind, guided by the Holy Spirit, set about any thing which God's law commanded, but he found the law of the members making a strong resistance. This he groaned under as a heavy burden, and was humbled for it before God, expecting pardon from him and victory every day, and perfect deliverance at last.

I cannot enlarge upon this chapter. Turn to it, and read it over upon the plan which I have here laid down, remembering all along, that St. Paul is describing himself. He ten times

says it is himself he is speaking of from ver. 7 to ver. 14. where he is shewing of what use the law had been to him, when he was first convinced of sin, and from thence to the end he mentions himself thirty-eight times. I the apostle Paul, I myself, my very self, and not another; I myself am now, at this present, at the very time of writing this; I myself, whom the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made free from the law of sin and death; I myself, to whom now there is no condemnation, for I am in Christ Jesus, and I walk after the Spirit, am still at war with sin that dwelleth in me, with the old man, with the flesh, with the law of the members, with the body of sin. Although I have a new nature, and God is on my side, yet it is a hard and a sharp battle. I find it so. The length of it makes it still more painful, and forces me to cry out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Paul was not out of God's favour, or accursed, but as the word rendered wretched means, he was weary and tired with this continual fighting, troubled with the filthy motions of sin rising and striving and rebelling in him, and giving him no rest; this was such a hard warfare, that he was ever looking out and praying, 'Who shall deliver me?' He meant wholly, perfectly, deliver me from this corruption. He sighed for it, not because he doubted of an absolute deliverance, but because he had sure and certain hope of it; not because he was ignorant who his deliverer was, but because he had steadfast faith in him. 'Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ.' This comforted him, and kept him fighting on with courage. He knew that he should gain the victory, and through Christ; not through his own works, but through faith in the life and death, in the blood and righteousness, of Christ, he should at last be more than conqueror.

Since this was the case with the apostle, who can expect a discharge from this warfare until death? What! says one, is it to continue so long? Yes. The Scripture is very clear to this point, as I was thirdly to shew.

The seat of the corruption of the old man, or of the flesh, is not only in our nature, but is also our very nature itself. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, altogether carnal and corrupt. It is a filthy fountain, always sending forth impure streams; and therefore, while the believer is in the body, he must either be fighting against the flesh, or else be led captive by it. We that are, says Paul, in this tabernacle of flesh, do groan, being burdened with sin and sorrow. And when did

they expect an end of their groaning, and rest from their burdens? Not till the tabernacle was dissolved by death. Ourselves, says he, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, 'even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' The body will be redeemed from the grave, and raised like the glorious body of Jesus Christ: this is promised, and this we wait for, and, until death deliver us from this mortal corruptible body, we shall be groaning under the burden of it. This was St. Paul's case. He had long sighed to be discharged from his warfare, and, like an old weary, tired soldier, he wished the hard tedious campaign was ended, that he might enter into rest: but hear with what joy he at last cries out, 'I have fought the good fight.' Have fought it? What, is the battle over? Yes, just over. 'I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand—I have finished my course.' My battle and my life are finished together—and so must thine, reader. Thou art to resist unto blood striving against sin; for thou art called to fight the good fight of faith, until thou lay hold of eternal life. Since thou art a believer, however weak, and hast a new man in thee, as well as an old, they will be fighting against each other, till thou finish thy course; and, if this discourage thee, consider what God has spoken concerning this warfare, and what exceeding great and precious promises he has made to them who are engaged in it. He has promised to pardon those corruptions of the old man, to subdue them, and to deliver thee from the very being of them. Canst thou desire more? Mark well what he says to thee, and be not faithless, but believing.

First, Although the believer has an old man, corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, always warring against the new man, the Lord God has promised a free and a full pardon; because he has imputed sin, all thy sin, to the Son of his love, who bore it in his own body upon the tree. After the apostle in Rom. vii. had described the battle between them, he makes this inference; 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus,'—to them who are *in* Christ, united by faith as members to him their head, and thereby partakers of his righteousness, there is now, while they are fighting against their corruptions, no condemnation; 'For (says he) the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and of death,' Rom. viii. 2. These words demonstrate, that Paul was speaking of himself in the seventh chapter. Although he had the corruption of nature

still in him, and was fighting against it, being in Christ by faith, he was made free from the guilt and punishment due to it; therefore he had, and every believer shall have, a full pardon. In consequence of which,

Secondly, He shall subdue the corruptions of the old man. This is promised, and shall be made good. The Lord encourages believers to oppose the reign of sin in their mortal body, and not to obey it in the lusts thereof, with this promise; 'Sin shall not have dominion over you,' Rom. vi. 14. Ye are under grace, and grace is almighty to subdue sin; because it is atoned for. In like manner he says to the Galatians, v. 16. 'Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.' Ye shall not fulfil them either in word or deed. The lusts of the flesh will be in you, but not one of them shall reign over you: the Spirit of Jesus will teach you to resist, and enable you to overcome them, yea to crucify and mortify them day by day. And, besides this, the Lord has promised,

Thrdly, Deliverance from the very being of thy corruptions. The time is coming, when they shall not exist in the believer, nor any more be suffered to tempt him. He shall be made holy and blameless, without spot or wrinkle of sin, or any such thing. In this perfect state the Father now sees him, and accepts him in the Beloved, and after death admits the soul into his presence, cleansed with the blood, clothed with the righteousness, adorned with the graces, of his dear Son; and body, soul and spirit shall be in this perfect state in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ—they shall be unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. It doth not appear how great a perfection of holiness this will be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall then be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Such are the divine promises. And dost thou not see from hence, reader, what great things thou art to expect in thy present warfare? If thou sayest, How shall I attain all that is promised? Know, that it is to come to thee by faith. Christ and all that he has is thine upon believing, and particularly a free pardon for indwelling sin, as well as for any other. Consider him as thy surety God-man, taking thy sins and sufferings upon himself to save thee from them. By his life and death, he has obtained full salvation, which he gives to thee freely; and thou hast received it. Thou canst not deny but thou art a believer, and it is written, 'All that believe are justified from all things,' from the corruption of their nature as

well as the corruptions of their lives. Know, then, that there is no condemnation to thee. The judge himself says so; and, when he acquits, who shall lay any thing to thy charge? Here thou must hold through the power of the Lord, if thou wouldst have thy spiritual warfare successfully conducted. Abide by the sentence of God, and keep condemnation out of thy conscience: have it ready to plead against all charges, from whatever quarter they come, that Christ hath made ME free from the law of sin and death.

Here I must refer thee back to what has been said concerning Christ and his finished salvation. Thou now seest how necessary it is thou shouldst be well established in the belief of his godhead, and the infinite sufficiency of his salvation; so that he is able and willing to save thee from all thy sins, and all the misery due to them, and to bestow upon thee eternal happiness, and to bring thee by his almighty power safe to the eternal enjoyment of it. All this he will give to thee, not for working, but in believing. I entreat thee therefore to read, again and again, what has been before said upon these subjects, and the good Lord help thee to apply it to thy present case, that thou mayest be fully assured thou art in Christ, and that there is no condemnation to thee.

But perhaps thou art ready to say, Steadfastly do I believe all this; but I do not find such victory over my corruptions as I could wish, nay I think at times they rage more than ever. Here thou forgettest the Lord thy strength. Thou dost not make use of him, and therefore thou failest. The woman with the bloody issue grew worse and worse, till she went to Christ; so wilt thou. Why is it given thee to know Christ in the Spirit, but that thou shouldst go to him daily, and plead his promise—Lord, thou hast declared, that sin shall not have dominion over thy people; I believe this word of thine cannot be broken, and therefore, helpless in myself, I rely upon thy faithfulness to save me from the dominion of such and such a sin (as then tempts thee.) Put forth thy power, O Lord Christ, and get thyself glory in subduing my flesh with its affections and lusts. And then trust him to make his word good, and wait the event. Sooner shall heaven and earth pass away, than sin, any sin, thus left with Christ to be subdued, shall reign over thee.

If thou sayest, I think I seek for victory over sin in no other way, and yet I do not attain it so completely as I desire. Depend upon it thou art under some mistake: for Christ is almighty to fulfil every promise in its largest sense and fullest

meaning, and there never was a believer who could justly charge him with a breach of his word. Perhaps thou dost believe, that power to subdue sin comes from Christ, and thou art expecting it from him; but hast thou not some legal dependence, some notion of thy own working together with him? Search and see. Dost thou commit *all* to the Lord, who is to do *all* and in *all?* Is the whole battle left to him—wisdom, and courage, and armour, and strength, and patience, and victory—are all from the Lord? If thou art not doing this simply, thou art not living by faith upon Christ, but thou art fighting in thine own strength, and depending upon some inherent stock of grace, or knowledge, or experience. While these proud selfish motives put thee upon asking his help, he will not give it thee; because thou dost not wholly depend upon him for it.

Or perhaps Christ does not appear on thy side, because thou art proposing some wrong end. Thou art working and striving against sin to establish a righteousness of thine own, which is to be some part of thine acceptance before God, and thou hast been trying in thine own strength to get thy corruptions quite subdued; but they were too strong for thee, and therefore now thou art glad to make use of Christ's help: and if he would do the work for thee, then thou wouldst have confidence in the flesh, and this thy fancied holiness would be the ground of thy rejoicing before God. Is it not so? If it be, thou wilt never succeed upon this plan. Christ will not give his glory to another, nor put the crown of his gospel-grace upon the head of thy legal dependence.

Or perhaps thou art expecting from Christ what he has not promised; such a victory over thy corruptions, that they shall not fight again for some time, or that they shall be quite dead and buried: and so they shall be in the Lord's appointed time. But now he calls upon thee to fight against them, he provides the armour for that purpose, even the whole armour of God; and he requires thee to resist unto blood striving against sin, promising thee daily victory. This is thy present state of warfare; to this thou art now called, and there is no discharge in this war. O beware then, as thou lovest thy soul, of a false peace. Thou wilt be sadly deluded, if thou ever supposest that thy fighting is over, before thy course be finished. The good fight of faith must continue till death; for, till then, corruption being in thee, thou must oppose it, relying upon God for promised victory over it. He is able to save thee from the very being of it now, as well as in heaven; but it is not his mind and will. Here he will have thee to

live by faith, which is every moment to keep thee dependent upon Christ, or thou wilt fall. This is to exalt his grace, and to subdue thy selfish legal spirit, to humble thy pride, to put thee upon prayer and watchfulness, to make sin more hateful, and heaven more desirable, and to secure the glory of every victory to him, whose strength is perfected in thy weakness. These are some of his gracious purposes in keeping thee continually dependent upon his strength; and, if he has made thee willing to fight and conquer, to the praise of the glory of his grace, then thou wilt experience that blessed promise, 'sin shall not have dominion over thee:' and it will not be long before sin shall not have a being in thee.

Reader, if thou hast fallen into these or any other mistakes concerning the subduing of thy corruptions, mind what is written, and what is promised. Having first received, through faith in the blood of Christ, the pardon of thy sin, then as one of his good soldiers thou art to fight against it all thy life: he, being on thy side, promises to subdue sin for thee. Without him thou canst do nothing in this warfare, and therefore thy faith, resting on his promise, is to wait the fulfilling of it. He has given thee his word, that he will use his almighty power for this purpose. To that word must thou look, believing that Christ will bring thee victory continually, if thy faith fail not; greater, as thy faith increases; complete, when the good fight of faith shall be ended, and thou shalt rest from thy labours. All this he stands engaged to do, and his power is able to fulfil his engagements, and thy faith will bring the happy experience of his power. When corruptions rise, temptations are strong, enemies numerous, dangers on every side, that is the time to glorify Christ, by making use of his promised strength; then put thy trust in the Captain of thy salvation, and fear not; look unto Jesus, and look at nothing but him: the battle is his, he will fight for thee, and thou shalt hold thy peace. Leave him to direct all, to do all, and to finish all, relating to it; and then, as he can get all the glory, thou shalt see what a salvation he will bring thee. O that thy faith did but reach to the extent of his promises! how successful would be thy spiritual warfare: such victories over thine enemies, corruptions so subdued, the world so crucified, Satan so defeated, as thou canst now scarce believe? The Lord increase thy faith; look up to him for it: because, as thy faith increases, let the battle grow hotter and hotter, thou wilt find thyself safer, and more reason to give thanks to God through Jesus Christ thy Lord.

For want of attending to the important truths already considered, and of bringing them into constant use and exercise, young believers are liable to fall into another great mistake, which keeps their faith weak, and stops its growth, namely, a hearkening to sense, and trusting to its reports, which is the fifth general head I purpose to consider.

They are seeking to be established; and they think, that they should have no doubt of their being true believers, if they had but the testimony of sense, and comfortable feelings to assure them of it; and, being used to judge in this way in other matters, for it is our strongest evidence in natural things, they are disposed to expect the same in spiritual; and they are the rather disposed to it, because sensible comforts are promised in Scripture; which being very desirable and pleasing to nature, they are apt to covet them too much, and, from not regarding what the Scripture says about them, they are apt to seek them in a wrong way, and for a wrong end. Sense judges from what it sees, and draws its inferences from what it feels: so that its report to the conscience, either of a believer's state, or of his growth, in it, is not from unchangeable things, which would settle the conscience in peace, but from changeable things, which leave room for continual doubting. Sense also looks at the fruits of faith more than at the object of it, and if the believer has been misled, and taught to confound these two together, he will be at a great uncertainty in judging of his state: for, instead of making the word of God, he will make his comforts the ground of his faith, and as these are more or less, so will his faith be: when he has comfortable feelings, then he will think himself a believer; and, when he has none, then he will think himself an unbeliever, changing his judgment of himself, as his feelings do, like the wind, and varying as his comforts do, like the weather. This is a common case; I have seen the sad effects of it in the lives of many of my acquaintance, who, from being taught thus to judge for themselves, were tossed about for several years, up and down, now comforted, then doubting, and could not get any solid establishment, till the word and Spirit of God convinced them that sense was not to be the ground of their believing, nor the object to which they were to look. Sense judges by feeling, and reports what it sees. Sense says, Now I am in the favour of God; for I feel it. Now he is my God; for I find him so, I am comforted. Now he demonstrates it to me; for I feel nearness to him in prayer, and sweet answers. Now I am sure my duties and services are accept-

able; for I am quite lively in them, and I come from them with warm affections. Now I cannot doubt; for I feel the assurance of his love to me: and when sense has lost those comfortable feelings, then it draws contrary inferences.—Now I am not in the favour of God; for I don't feel it. Now he is not my God; for I don't find him so, I am not comforted, &c. What can be the issue of this but continual wavering and changing? for our feelings are sometimes more, and sometimes less, as every believer experiences. What an unsettled state then must he be in, who has no way to judge of himself, but by those changeable things! what room does he leave for continual doubting, and what trouble and misery does he thereby bring upon himself, as well as dishonour to the unchangeableness of God in his nature and promises.

If the poor weak believer should say, I am convinced of this, and I should be glad to have my faith so fixed, that I might be freed from doubts and fears: then let it rest upon the word of God, which is the only ground of believing, and is therefore called the word of faith, upon which faith is built, and by which it is nourished and grows up. The believer should receive and rely upon what God hath spoken, and because he hath spoken it: for his word changeth not. It abideth the same for ever; therefore, what it truly reports stands upon an immoveable rock. Sense and feeling may report things contrary to it, but the believer can silence them with—God has spoken it: for his faith has evidence of things not seen, and he does not form his judgment by the things which are seen, but by the things which are not seen. Generally speaking, faith judges the very contrary to what sense perceives: Abraham against hope believeth in hope, so do all his children. They believe the pardon of sin, victory over sin, and the death of sin, the immortality of the body, though crumbled to dust and atoms, the second coming of Christ, and the eternal state of happiness or misery. Faith looks at God's word, calling the things which be not, as though they were, and is commonly forced to contradict sense. Sense judges from what it sees—Faith from what God says. Sense is governed by what appears—Faith by what God says shall be. Sense looks inward—Faith looks outward. Faith can answer the seeming contradictions, which sense opposes to it, from the word of God, which cannot be broken; and when sense is ready to despair, and all its fine frames and feelings are gone, then it is the believer's happy privilege still to trust in the Lord, and to have *a good hope because of* the word of his grace.

But perhaps thou art ready to say, It is written, that there is great joy and peace in believing, yea, joy unspeakable and full of glory. True, these are what faith produces, and not what it is. These are the fruits of faith, which it brings forth in most abundance from the inexhaustible fulness of Jesus. The more simple the believer is, the more he eyes Christ the object of faith, and his word the ground of faith, the more clear and distinct will the actings of his faith be, and consequently it will bring greater peace into the conscience, and more joy into the affections: but still these fruits are not faith; no more than the fruit is the tree. The fruits do not go before faith, but follow it, and grow from it: this is God's order. He gives us his word to be the ground of our believing, and, by believing, all things promised in the word are made ours, then we go on comfortably, and are happy; but when sense is put in the place of the word, then the consequence is, that weak believers have got a changeable rule to judge of themselves by, which hinders them from being established in believing, and from attaining the promised peace and joy.

Some may begin to object, What! are you against all lively frames and sensible comforts? No, God forbid. I would have them spring from the right cause, that they might be more pure and fixed than they commonly are. God's word and promises are an unchangeable foundation to rest upon, even when sensible feelings are gone; because Christ revealed in the word, and laid hold of in the promises, changeth not. Therefore, reader, for thine own sake, and for the glory of God, take heed what thou buildest thy faith upon. Beware of making any thing, that sense reports to thee, the ground of it, but rest upon that which abideth for ever. The word of God is a sure foundation. It will never fail thee. Thou mayest safely depend upon it, because it cannot be broken, and steadfastly rely upon Christ to make its promises good to thee. There is thy object: look at him. And, since he is thine, thy Saviour and thy God, make use of him as such, and trust body and soul, and all things belonging to them, in his hands, and, among the rest, thy comforts. Be content he should give them to thee as seemeth him good. Set not thy heart upon them, nor follow him, as the multitude did, for the sake of his loaves and fishes, and the dainties that he gave them, who, when these were withheld, soon forsook their kind benefactor. Thou art by faith to make up all thy happiness in him, and in him only: and he himself, being thine, let him *give thee or take* away what he will besides, thou hast enough.

What! is not this comfort enough, that thou hast got the Pearl of great price, the infinitely rich, inestimably-precious Jesus? who has the wisdom of God to contrive what is best for thee, boundless love to dispose him, and almighty power to enable him to give it thee, and he has promised it; canst thou desire more? Walk then with him by faith, and not by sight. When the word of God is the ground of thy faith, which rests there and is grown to a fixed settlement, then thou wilt be enabled to go on comfortably, whatever thy frames and feelings be; yea, when these are at the lowest ebb, thou wilt not be thereby discouraged. Suppose thou art walking in darkness, thou canst walk by faith; because thou hast a promise, 'Who is among you that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.' Isa. l. 10. Still let him trust and believe. Why? Because God is his God still. Mind that, *his* God still; this blessed relation still subsists, and faith may draw comfort from it in the darkest hour. Suppose thou art in heaviness through manifold temptations, the word says to thee, 'heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning:' here thou mayest quiet thy heavy heart, and rest with confidence, till the Lord deliver thee out of thy temptations. Suppose God hideth his face from thee, thou hast the example of those in the same case, 'I will wait for the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and will look for him,' Isa. viii. 17. Wait in faith, looking for him, and thou shalt see the light of his countenance. Suppose all other comforts fail; thou has one still, worth more than all—'This God is my God for ever and ever. He will never leave me nor forsake me.' This is the happiness of the true believer, he is enabled to maintain his confidence, when sensible feelings are no more. And thou seest, reader, how this happiness is attained, and how it is preserved. It is by trusting to things which change not, the word of God, the Son of God, and promises; all which are in him, yea, made in him, and in him amen, fulfilled by him. May the Lord help thee simply to trust his word, and to live upon Christ for the fulfilling of it, and then thou wilt indeed get, what thou art now seeking in vain, a comfortable frame, and will be enabled to maintain it against all the discouragements of sense. To that end search the Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation; and let it be thy daily request to the Lord, to make thee strong in faith, that thou mayest not stagger at his promises through unbelief, but

mayest against hope believe in hope. Beg of him, when sense goes contrary to the word, to enable thee still to believe it, and not to doubt of Christ's faithfulness to fulfil it: and ask for strength to walk every moment by faith, and not by sight. Thus the Lord will carry thee on safely and sweetly from faith to faith, till thou receive the end of thy faith, even the salvation of thy soul. May it be so. Amen.

St. Paul has been my guide hitherto. He says, Heb. v. 13, that a babe in Christ is one who is unskilful in the word of righteousness. To this determination of his, I have had an eye all along, and have accordingly endeavoured to remove those hinderances out of the way of young beginners, which chiefly arise from their unskilfulness in the word of righteousness. Righteousness signifies strict justice; with respect to God it is paying him the full demands of his holy law: in this sense there is none of us righteous, no not one. The God-man, Christ Jesus, the surety of his people, came to work out such a righteousness for them, and the word reveals it, sets it before them in its infinite sufficiency to justify from all things. The word is also the means, in the hand of the Spirit, of bringing them with the heart to believe unto righteousness; and therefore the Scripture is called the word of righteousness, and being unskilful in it signifies the want of experience in, the management of it, unskilful in the knowledge of the person of the Lord our righteousness, who is true and very God, as well as true and very man; unskilful in the nature of his righteousness, that is absolutely perfect and everlastingly meritorious, so that any sinner by receiving it will be not only delivered from sin, and all the miseries due to sin, but will also be entitled to life and glory; unskilful in the gift of righteousness, how freely God bestows it, nothing being required to make it the sinner's but receiving it, and therefore, it is called the righteousness of faith; because by faith he trusts in it for salvation, and for all its blessings in earth and heaven, and expects them as the fruits of righteousness: unskilful in experience, not knowing how to plead this righteousness against the charges of the law, of conscience, and of the accuser of the brethren, and therefore apt to fall into a legal spirit, to be distressed in their warfare between the old man and the new, and to covet and to rely more upon sensible feelings than upon the sure testimony of God in his word. These are some of the principal difficulties which young believers meet with, and they all arise from their unskilfulness in the word of righteousness, and therefore I have particularly considered some Scrip-

ture motives for removing them out of the way. And after thou hast perused these motives, have they been the means of settling thy judgment, comforting thy conscience, and strengthening thy faith? Dost thou see more of Christ's grace and power to save thee a sinner, than thou didst before, and therefore canst trust him better, and in time of need make more use of his promised grace? If this be thy case, give him the glory, and may he carry thee on from strength to strength. But if thou hast received no improvement from reading thus far—what is the reason? Perhaps thou art under some of the temptations here described. Search and see: and whatever it be, either in doctrine or experience, which hinders the increase of thy faith, may the Lord discover it to thee, and enable thee to overcome it, that thou mayest be no longer a babe, unskilful in the word of righteousness, but mayest grow up to be a young man, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

The apostle Paul has directed me how to speak to the babes in Christ; and another apostle shows how they grow up to be young men, and thereby he furnishes me with matter for the second part of this treatise on the life of faith. 'I have written unto you young men (says he,) because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one,' 1 John ii. 14. These young men knew the principles of the doctrine of Christ; they were established in the belief of his godhead, of the infinite sufficiency of his salvation, of the free gift of all its graces and blessings promised to him that worketh not, and received by faith only, and all treasured up for the believer's use in the fulness of Christ Jesus, to whom he is to bring nothing to recommend him, but the promise of the grace which he then wants, and a dependence upon Christ to supply that want. These young men had attained to a good degree of knowledge and experience in these truths. They began to be able to keep the evidence of their union with Christ clear and distinct, and to prove it by their communion with him in all his offices: but, notwithstanding their establishment in these points, they had many temptations and great difficulties; still they knew but in part, still they had a fleshly corrupt nature to watch over and to fight against, always inclining them to trust to the law, to their feeling, to any thing but Christ, and always disposing them to yield to the suggestions of the devil, and to the allurements of the world. This warfare, instead of ceasing, grows hotter and hotter, but they grow stronger. It is the peculiar character of the young men in Christ *to be strong:* they have

learnt where their strength lies, and they put it forth: they go down to battle, not trusting in any power or might of their own, but strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might: he is their strength. When the enemy cometh in like a flood, then to Jesus they look for safety and victory; 'O our God, we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee.' The abiding sense of their own weakness keeps them dependent upon him; so that the more they feel of their helplessness, the stronger they grow: because they live more upon Christ for strength, which illustrates that seeming paradox of the apostle, 'When I am weak then I am strong;' when I am most sensible of my own weakness, then am I strongest in the Lord—his strength is then perfected in me, and his strength is put forth in the effectual working of it by believing. It is not, neither can it be, inherent in them, who without Christ can do nothing, but it is brought in by faith; nor does faith bring it in to lodge it, or lay it up in store, till it shall be wanted; but, when it is wanted, faith then regards the promise, looks up to Christ to fulfil it, and receives strength, out of his fulness: and, being his, freely promised, and freely given, it is therefore called the strength of grace. 'Thou, therefore, my son (says Paul to Timothy,) be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.' Strong faith gets strong grace from Christ, according as it is written, 'All things are possible to him that believeth:' for, according to his faith, it shall be done unto him. If his faith reach to the full extent of the promises, he shall find all things possible, which God has promised, yea, he shall be able to do all things through Christ strengthening him.

This is the life of the young men in Christ: they are strong in him, living upon his promised strength, and by faith receiving it. They live not upon any thing in themselves; but whatever they stand in need of, and whatever they have a promise for, that they expect shall be given them by the power of God their Saviour. They see themselves poor helpless creatures, full of continual wants, and no means in their own power to supply them. The sense of this empties them of self-greatness and self-dependence, and the abiding sense of this keeps them humble and dependent upon Christ. Thus the Lord teaches them how to live out of themselves, and to be always receiving out of the Saviour's fulness grace for grace. They have his infinite storehouse to repair to, in which there is treasured up for them every thing that they can possibly want. Happy for them, their God has promised to supply all

their need out of the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus, and by faith they have an abundant supply to the praise of that God, who keepeth his promise for ever.

In him they live—he is the Lord and giver of spiritual life, as Paul says, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' They are made strong in him, 'The Lord is the strength of my life,' says the Psalmist, Psa. xxvii. 1. that life which I live by the faith of the Son of God has all its strength from him.

And is continued by his power—'For none can keep alive his own soul,' Psa. xxii. 29. 'It is God who holdeth our soul in life,' Psa. lxvi. 9.

And is kept by faith—'Ye are kept by the power of God through faith,' 1 Pet. i. 5. Whatever strength the believer wants, to enable him to bear hardship, endure the cross, fight his spirital enemies, daily gain victories over them, he expects it from God, and through faith he receives it, and is kept—yea, so kept

As to be confirmed unto the end. He that is able to keep believers from falling, will keep them until they receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. Thus the life which Christ begins by his grace he continues by his strength; and every act of this spiritual life is from him. The will, the power, is his; for he doeth all, and in all. These young men were so well assured of this, that they lived upon Christ for strength, and they received it; they were strong in him: their faith viewed him in his exalted state, with all power in heaven and earth, and engaged as their covenant-head to use it for them, to make them and to keep them alive to God. On this power they depended; and, whatever promise they had of its being used in their behalf, they pleaded it out at the throne of grace, and trusted Christ with the fulfilling of it: he never disappointed them. They were made strong, and stood fast in the Lord, who never withdrew his supporting arm; therefore, they never ceased to put their whole trust and confidence in him.

When the enemy sees them thus strong in the Lord, through faith, it stirs up his devilish malice, and makes him burn with envious rage; he leaves no temptation untried to draw them from Christ. He is well skilled in cunning wiles and sly devices for this purpose. He does not begin with tempting them to open sin: that would at once discover his wicked design: but he artfully tries to sap the foundation, and to weaken their faith. If he can get them from dependence upon Christ, he carries his point; and too, too often he succeeds.

O beware, reader, of every thing; suspect it, let its appearance be ever so fair and good, which in the last tends to weaken thy fast hold of Christ. Cleave to him with full purpose of heart, as long as ever thou livest: for the enemy's whole plan is to separate thee from him.. Formerly he tried to do this by distressing thee about thy sin—how they could be pardoned—whether being so great, so many, the blood of Christ could cleanse from all: now thou hast through believing received forgiveness of sins, he will try to do the same by distressing thee about thy duties. Sometimes he will try to bring guilt into thy conscience by suggesting to thee thy many failings and short-comings in them—the disorder of thine imagination—thy wanderings in thy prayers—thy dulness in hearing and reading the word—the little life and power thou findest in thine attendance upon the ordinances—and the coldness of thy love to God and man. If he can get thee to dwell upon these things so as to forget Christ, then he has made way for this insinuation,—How could it be thus with thee, and thou a strong believer? And if he can get thee to reason upon it, then he has thee fast, thou art catched in his snare.

But if the Lord has taught thee not to be ignorant of Satan's devices, as soon as the thought arises, whether thou art in Christ, because of such failings, thou wilt know from what quarter it comes, and wilt immediately resist it. So that the temptation will make thee stand faster; it will drive thee closer to Christ, make thy dependence stronger on his blood and righteousness: put thee upon making more use of him as thy intercessor and advocate with the Father, and help thee to live more out of thyself by faith upon him. Thus Christ becomes precious—thou art more humble: the snare is broken, and thou art delivered.

When the enemy sees this, his implacable malice will soon tempt thee again. He has another deep-laid stratagem relating to thy duties, and that is from their being unsuccessful. Thou hast had something laid much upon thy heart, and thou hast carried it to God in prayer, and thou hast waited long, but no answer comes. Upon this Satan takes occasion to suggest—Now you see God does not give you what you ask, although he has promised, ask and ye shall have; the fault cannot be in him, therefore it is plain you are not in his favour; his promises do not belong to you. And if he can thus work a little upon thy impatience, he will soon get thee into doubting and unbelief. Here thou mayest see how all this

wiles of Satan tend to one point, namely, to separate thee from Christ—and how necessary then is it, that thou shouldest have this settled beyond all question, that Christ and thou art one. If this be maintained in thy conscience, then Satan's stratagem is defeated: for Christ being thine, he will give thee every thing that he has promised; and although thou hast it not just at the time thou hast fixed thyself, yet he knows best. Thou shalt certainly have it, if his infinite wisdom sees it good for thee, and if he does not see it good, his love will give thee something better. Thy faith must wait God's time. Strong faith can wait long. Having such a promise as this to depend upon—'they shall not be ashamed who wait for me,' Isa. xlix. 33. thou mayest with confidence wait, and be a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises, who by faith regarded the promises, by patience waited for the fulfilling of them; and, although they waited long, yet they succeeded at last, and did inherit every grace and blessing, for which with faith and patience they had been waiting. Go, and do thou likewise.

Upon the failing of these temptations, the enemy has another ready. Since he cannot get thee off thy guard, by bringing thee into doubting and unbelief, he will attack thy faith in another way: he will come like an angel of light, and seem to be Christ's friend and thine; he will allow thee to be a child of God, and to be strong in faith: the more clearly thou art satisfied of thy union with Christ, the more will he improve, if thou art not aware, this thy certainty to his own wicked purposes: he will try to keep thine eye upon thy great graces and high gifts; he will flatter thee exceedingly upon them, and will tempt thee to view them with a secret delight, every now and then insinuating—What a great Christian thou art—how few there are like thee—to what an exalted state thou hast attained—what temptations thou hast overcome—what victories thou hast gained over Satan—and how safe thou art now, fast upon the rock! And if he finds this pleasing bait is not instantly rejected with a Get thee behind me, Satan; then he will begin to work upon thy self-love, and to give thee many plausible reasons for self-admiration; so that thou shalt first look pleasingly at, then fondly love, and at last sacrilegiously dote upon thy wondrous attainments. Thus he will lift thee up with pride, and will try to draw thee into his own crime, and into his own condemnation. What a dangerous temptation is this! How many have I known who fell into it! If thou sayest,

by what means shall I escape it? Mind the first approach: for it is coming upon thee, as soon as thou beginnest to think of thyself more highly than thou oughtest to think. Thou art in thyself a poor, miserable, helpless sinner, and to this very moment without Christ thou canst do nothing. Thou canst not do one good thing, nor overcome the weakest enemy, nor take one step in the way to heaven, without Christ: nay, thou canst not think one good thought without him. What hast thou then to be proud of, and to stir up thy self-admiration? Nothing but sin. The humble abiding sense of this tends to thy safety; for while this is ever present with thee, 'In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,' it will lead thee to live by faith upon Christ for all good things: and, being all his, and received every moment from him as his free gift, thou wilt be glorifying and exalting him in all and for all, knowing that he resisteth the proud, but he giveth grace unto the humble. The Lord keep thee humble, and then thou wilt have grace to escape this cunning wile of the devil.

If thou shalt say, Alas! I am fallen into it, how shall I recover myself? Remember his case who, in his prosperity, said he never should be moved, the favour of the Lord had made his mountain to stand so strong, Psa. xxx. 6, 7. He was too confident in himself, and was moved. How did he recover his standing? 'I cried unto the Lord, and unto the Lord I made my supplication. Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be thou my helper.' His prayer was heard, he found mercy to pardon his offence, and help to raise him up, and his mourning, he says, was turned into joy and gladness. Look up as he did to the Lord Christ; plead thy pardon through his promised mercy, and beg of him to enable thee to walk more humbly with thy God: then shall the Psalmist's experience be thine, and thou shalt escape the snare, which was laid for thy precious life.

These young men, having thus overcome the devices which Satan had contrived to weaken their faith, must expect a fresh attack from him: he will tempt them concerning the ground of faith. He sees they are strong, because the word of God abideth in them, therefore he will use all his cunning and power to weaken their trust in the word and promises of God. By the incorruptible seed of the word faith is begotten, and by the same word it is nourished up and strengthened, growing exceedingly from faith to faith. The word, which is the sole ground of faith, reveals

the covenant made by the eternal Trinity for the salvation of sinners, and makes many free promises of every covenant-blessing to him that believeth. These promises may almost steadfastly be relied upon, because of the unchangeable nature of God who makes them. All his perfections are engaged for the fulfilling of his word; so that what he has spoken has an actual being and existence. He says, and it is done—saying and doing are the same with him. Let there be ever so great a distance of time between the word spoken, and the thing done, yet this is as real as any thing now in being: because it exists in the mind and will of God, is revealed in his word, and by his faithfulness and almighty power is to be established at the time appointed. How is it possible then that his word should be broken? There is no matter of fact of more undoubted evidence, nothing in futurity, not even the rising of the sun to-morrow, so fixed and certain as the accomplishment of God's promises to him that believeth. These young men in Christ were most assuredly persuaded of this truth: they knew that heaven and earth should pass away before one tittle of God's promises should fail: they looked upon them all as made in Christ, in him yea, and in him amen, made in him and fulfilled to him, as the Head of the body the church, and in him fulfilled to all his members. As certainly as every one of them has been made good to him, the Head, so will they be made good to his members: he has all power in heaven and earth committed to him for that very purpose. Whoever by believing is joined to him, has thereby a right and title to every promise, and may boldly sue it out in time of need; and then it is Christ's office and glory to fulfil the promise. If mountains of difficulties stand in the way, the believer need not fear or doubt—Christ is upon the throne. What are difficulties against his almighty power? besides, Christ has already given him good security. He has put into his hands the pledges and earnests of the promised inheritance, and how is it possible he should fail in fulfilling his engagements, and putting him in due time into actual possession? Read what the apostle says on this subject. Turn to the passage: for it is too long to quote, Heb. vi. from verse 11 to the end of the chapter, in which you may observe these particulars:

1. The heirs of promise are apt to be full of doubt, and to have strife in their consciences about their right and title to all the graces and blessings of salvation.

2. God was willing out of his infinite mercy to establish their right and title to them beyond dispute, and to put an end to all strife:

3. Therefore he engaged by promise to give them all those graces and blessings; and,

4. To shew the unchangeableness of his will herein, he confirmed the promise by an oath.

5. It is impossible that God should lie in his promise, or that he should be perjured in his oath.

6. Therefore here are two immutable things to strengthen the faith and hopes of the heirs of promise.

7. While their faith rests upon those immutable things, it will always bring them strong consolation.

8. When enemies, dangers, and temptations, attack them, they are safe, by fleeing for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them in God's immutable promises.

9. This hope will be as useful to them, at such times, as an anchor to a ship. By it they will ride out all the storms of life, until Jesus, their forerunner, bring them within the veil, where their anchor is now cast, and put them into eternal possession of all the promises.

With what rich and copious matter does this Scripture abound, tending to shew the absolute safety of resting upon God's promises! How strong are the arguments, to persuade the heirs of promise to put their whole trust and confidence in the faithfulness of their God! who, having provided an infinitely glorious and everlasting inheritance for them, was willing to make it over to them in the strongest manner of conveyance, and therefore, he has given them the promise and the oath of God, which cannot possibly change or alter, that their faith might never doubt or waver, and their hope might at all times be sure and steadfast; and, until he bring them to the inheritance itself, he has given them many sweet and blessed promises of all things needful for their temporal and spiritual estate, upon which he would have them not only to live comfortably at present, but also to receive them, as part of the inheritance, allowed them for their maintenance, till they come to age, and enter upon the possession of the whole. And what God intended in his promise and oath, has its effects in a good degree among those, who have the word of God abiding in them. They cast their anchor where he commands them, and they are not only safe, but also, in time of the greatest troubles and temptations, have strong consolation. When enemies come, corruptions arise, and difficulties are in

the way, they have a promise and a promise-keeping God to depend upon. Whatever straits they are in, the word abiding in them brings some promise of support and deliverance; the promise shews what God has engaged to do, and faith receives the fulfilling of his engagements: when they draw nigh to God in duties, in ordinances, they know what he has promised to them that wait upon him, and they judge him faithful who hath promised; and lo, he is present with them. In short, while they live like themselves, as the heirs of promise, they are preserved from all evil, and want no manner of thing that is good. This is their happy case, thrice happy, because the means used to deprive them of their happiness are overruled of God for the establishing it: the enemy rages against them, but in vain; he was a liar from the beginning: the word is truth, and he abode not in it; therefore he hates it, and, with a greater hatred, because the Lord has made it the means of strengthening those believers. He knows that all his temptations will be fruitless while the word abideth in them; he fears no weapon formed against him, like the sword of the Spirit; he has felt its sharpness in its power; with it the Captain of our salvation cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon; with it all his good soldiers resist the devil, and make him flee from them. For these reasons he has great variety of temptations to weaken the believer's trust in the word, and his reliance upon the promises of God.

Sometimes he attacks them in a matter where his hopes are founded in their ignorance: he is cunning to spy out the particular way in which they have been led, and their readiness to maintain their ground, by making use of the promises suited to that way: he resolves, therefore, upon some new temptation, with which they have been exercised; and he watches the favourable opportunity to inject it with all his strength. Upon his doing it, the soul is put into a great hurry, because it has no promise ready to apply to the present case; for want of which the understanding is confused, faith wavers, doubt enters, and Satan carries his point. This demonstrates the necessity of searching the Scriptures, and meditating upon them night and day: in them God has graciously treasured up all sorts of promises. There is not a possible case for a believer to be in, of spiritual or temporal concern, but there is a promise suitable to it, which he ought to have ready against the hour of temptation. If he has not, he neglects the Lord's kind provision, and lays himself open to the enemy's attack. Reader, if thou wouldst not be igno-

rant of Satan's devices, follow Christ's counsel—'Search the Scriptures.' Remember, they are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus; therefore, store up his promises—pray him to sanctify thy memory to retain them, and to enable thee to make use of them in every time of need.

If this temptation fail, the enemy will soon have another ready. I have known him often try, and often succeed, in endeavouring to take off the attention from the most easy parts of Scripture, and to fix it upon those parts which are hard to be understood. Upon those the believer dwells too much, and puzzles himself; his head grows confused; he consults commentators, and they confuse him more: and if he does not fall from hence into questioning the truth of Scripture, yet he certainly neglects the right use of it, forgetting it is the means of building himself up in his most holy faith. Reader, whenever thou art tempted about difficult texts, look up to the incarnate Word, and pray him by his Spirit to open thine understanding, that thou mayest know what thou readest; and, if thou still dost not find the meaning of them made plain to thee, pass them by for that time. Do not puzzle and distress thyself about them. Perhaps when thou meetest with them again, they will appear easy, Christ will give thee light to see and to comprehend them.

If thou sayest, I do look up to him to teach me, but, nevertheless, I find many hard and difficult texts. Remember thou knowest but in part, and therefore thou standest in need of daily teaching. These texts are profitable, if they humble thee, and make thee live more upon the teaching of the divine Prophet. The humbler thou art, thou wilt be the more teachable: the lower thou sittest at his feet to hear his words, thou wilt learn the most. The Master himself has declared, 'Whosoever shall humble himself as a little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.' If these difficult texts thus humble thee, and make thee live more upon Christ's inward teaching, they will be the means of thy growth in saving knowledge. Thy hearing and reading the word in a constant dependence upon him, will keep thee from the dangerous errors and heresies of the times: most of those arise from unlearned and unstable men, full of pride and self-conceit, whom God resisteth; but he giveth grace to the humble.

If he has given thee grace to hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast learned and been assured of, the enemy will change his attack, and pursue thee with new temptations. Envious of thy happiness, he will be often assaulting thee

and try to move thee from thy steadfastness. He will, at times, insinuate every lie that he can raise against the word of God, and he will not begin with reason or argument, but by way of surprise, with sudden injections, darting into the mind doubts like these: How do I know the Scripture is inspired? What proof have I? And if these be not immediately rejected, he will follow them like lightning with others: How can that be inspired which is full of contradictions, and full of doctrines above reason? Who can defend the matters of fact related in it? The language is low and mean, unworthy of God—the Scripture is false—perhaps there is neither God nor devil.

These blasphemous thoughts sometimes put the believer into a hurry and confusion, and, through the suddenness and violence of them greatly distress him. The apostle calls these assaults 'the fiery darts of the wicked one'—darts, because he throws them with all his might against the soul; and fiery, because he would have them to catch hold of, and to inflame its corruptions and lusts: and they do, if the shield of faith be not ready to stop their force, and to quench their fire. This is a piece of the armour of God prepared for the believer's safety at such times, and the right use of it is this: the Lord having promised to be a shield to them that put their trust in him, and to compass them about with his favour as with a shield, the believer looks up when these fiery darts are flying thick about him, and says, 'O Lord God of hosts, who hast promised that thy faithfulness and truth should be my shield and buckler, now establish thy word unto thy servant. In thee, O my God, do I put my trust, save me in this hour of temptation.' Then the battle becomes the Lord's. He is engaged to put forth his strength, to shield thee from the enemy. Thus thou shalt conquer, and shalt happily experience what is written—'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.'

He will flee for a season, but will return again. He has other temptations, and he will try them all to disparage the word of God, and to lessen the believer's confidence in it. Sometimes he will insinuate—How can these things be—in what way or by what means can such a promise be fulfilled? If you begin to reason upon the point, he will get you from your strong hold, and conquer you. Beware of his lies, and have always your answer ready—'It is written.' What God hath said put your trust in, if all the world gainsay it; for he is faithful who hath promised, and all things are possible with him.

If this temptation does not succeed, and he cannot bring you to doubt of the truth of the promises, then he will try you about your right to them. When you are in darkness, or walking heavily, in sickness or any trouble, and you have been praying for deliverance, but Christ does not presently answer you, then he has a favourable opportunity to suggest —Now you see the promises do not belong to you, Christ will not hear you, and therefore you have been deceiving yourself with a vain notion of faith. This is a common temptation, against which still oppose, 'It is written.' Thy case, be it what it will, has a promise, either of support or deliverance. If thou art not delivered, yet if Christ support thee, so that thy faith and patience fail not, does not this shew his infinite goodness to thee? He will have thy faith tried, and he will put it into the fire, not to consume it, but that it may come like gold out of the furnace, purer and brighter. And what if thou art in the fire a great while, thou wilt see more of his tender mercies in keeping thee there, and wilt thereby learn to live in a more simple dependence upon him. Cast not away therefore thy confidence in the written word: the promises in it stand faster than the strong mountains. If all the powers in earth and hell should join, they cannot defeat one single tittle of them. When the world and all the works therein shall be burnt up, and the place of them shall be no more found, then the promises shall stand fast as the throne of God, and shall receive their full and perfect accomplishment through the ages of eternity.

These are some of Satan's temptations against the young men in Christ, who are strong, because the word of God abideth in them. His design is to weaken their reliance upon its promises: till he can do this, he despairs of success; and, therefore, he tries every method, which his wicked cunning and rage can invent. His busy active spirit is night and day plotting against the word of God. See a lively picture of his utter hatred to it in the parable of the sower. While the good seed is sowing, the devil is indefatigable in picking it up. He exercises all his wiles to keep it out of the hearers' hearts, and he prevails with the greater part to reject it. Among those who seemingly receive it, he cheats three out of four, so that the word does not take root, nor bear fruit to perfection. Since Satan is thus successful, is it not absolutely necessary, reader, that thou shouldest be well acquainted with his devices? And the word abiding in thee, the ingrafted word, will both make thee acquainted with them, and also strong to

resist them: because then thou wilt be taught by Christ's wisdom and strengthened by his almighty power. As thou growest in the sense of thy want of him, and livest in a closer dependence upon him, thou wilt understand more of his word, and experience more of his power. By which means the enemy's continual attacks, driving thee to Christ for the fulfilling of his promises, will make thee continually safe. Let the roaring lion rage, what hast thou to fear? Let him go about seeking whom he may devour, the Lord is thy shield and thy defence: in him is thy trust. Thou hast his promise, that he will preserve thee from all evil, and will make all things, even Satan's spite and rage against thee, work together for thy good. How dear and precious then should the word of God be to thee! If thou art weak, because it is the means of thy growing, and being nourished up; and, if thou art strong, because by its abiding in thee, thou wilt be established. May it be thy study and thy delight, and may every reading of it bring thee to a better acquaintance with, and a greater dependence upon, the adorable Jesus: and, if thou desirest thus to profit from the Scriptures, I would advise thee, reader, to observe two things, which will be much for Christ's glory, and for thy edification.

First, In thy frequent and careful perusal of the Bible, (and, mind, thou canst not read it too much,) take particular notice of the promises, which are most suited to thy age, state, and condition in life: because these God has graciously made for thy use, and about these the enemy will be most busy with thee. Treasure them up then in thy memory, and have them ready against the time of need, looking up,

Secondly, To Christ for the fulfilling of them. All the promises are made in him, and made good by him: thou art therefore in a humble dependence upon his faithfulness and power to expect whatever thou wantest, and he has promised. Trust him, and he will not fail thee. Stagger not at any of his promises through the seeming impossibility of their being made good; but depend upon his almighty power, and thou wilt find him a faithful, promise-keeping God, whose word standeth fast for ever and ever.

Thus thou shalt not only be safe, but shalt also overcome the wicked one, which the apostle John makes the last part of their character, who are strong in the Lord. They overcome him by the strength of their faith: they hold fast their confidence in the Lord's promised strength, and he fights for them. That mighty arm, which bruised the serpent's head, brings

them victory, as it is written of that noble army mentioned Rev. xii. 11. 'They overcame the accuser of the brethren by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.' Through faith in his blood they were pardoned and justified freely, and they knew that in him they had righteousness and strength; therefore they were at peace with God, and the accuser of the brethren could not lay any thing to their charge. Thus they were delivered from his power, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son; and they testified this by adhering to the word of truth. They believed that whatever Christ had therein promised, he would fulfil to them, and they bore their testimony to their being safe in depending upon his word in the most trying circumstances. They would not give it up whatever they lost for trusting to it: nay, they stuck steadfastly to its truth, although it cost them their lives for maintaining their testimony: for, it is said of them, 'they loved not their lives unto the death;' that is, they loved the truth more than life, they were not afraid publicly to own, that their trust and confidence was in the blood of the Lamb, and they believed they should be infinite and everlasting gainers by holding fast the word of their testimony unto death. And the Lord was with them, and mightily strengthened them, so that they joyfully sealed their testimony with their blood, although they died in flames, and in the most exquisite torments. Thus they overcame Satan. A most noble company of those conquerors are now standing round the throne of the Lamb, enjoying his exceeding great and precious promises: he has crowned them with glory—he has clothed them with robes washed and made white in his own blood—he has wiped away all tears from their eyes, and taken all cause of sorrow from their hearts—he has put palms into their hands, to shew that they are eternal conquerors, and that they shall stand confirmed in bliss for ever and ever. May thou and I, reader, ere long join them; and, until that happy time come, may our faith be daily more established in the blood and righteousness of the Lamb of God, that we may be growing in our love to him, and in our dependence upon him, until he admit us to see him as he is.

Through much exercise and fighting, these young men strong and mighty in the Scriptures, grow up to fathers in Christ, whose character is thus drawn by the apostle John, 1 Epist. ii. 14. 'I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning,' namely, Jesus Christ, whose style and title it is to be from the beginning, as

he himself speaks in Prov. viii. 22, 23. 'The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.' He was a person in the godhead, coequal and coeternal with the Father, but was set up in his office-character from everlasting to be the beginning of the ways and works of God. Upon account of what he was to do and suffer in man's nature, according to the grace of the covenant of the ever-blessed Trinity, he was the creator, and is the preserver of the universe: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, and by him all things subsist; and he is the beginning, the first cause of all things in nature, and also in grace, the head of the body of the church. In the same manner our Lord speaks of himself, Rev. i. 1. 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.' He is in and from the beginning, being the first cause of all the divine works in creation, in providence, and in redemption, the Author and the Finisher, the First and the Last in all, which shews the great propriety of describing him here by his name. The apostle is treating of the highest state of a believer, and he says it consists in knowing, that Jesus Christ is all and in all. Whatever good there is in his kingdom of nature from him it had its beginning, and by him it is preserved. Whatever good there is in his kingdom of grace, he is the author of it, by his power it is continued, and when brought to perfection he is the finisher. He is the beginning, he is the ending of all the counsels, and of all the works of God. In this light the fathers had learned to consider the Lord Jesus: they knew that he was to do all for them, and in them, and by them; they not only knew it speculatively, but had also experimental knowledge of it. 'Ye have known him that is from the beginning,' have known him, and tried him, and found him to be what his name signifies. And this is the right knowledge of Christ—not such as the devil has; he could say, 'I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God'—not such as too many nominal Christians have, who profess that they know God, but in works they deny him—not such as many professors attain, for whom it had been better not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they had known it to turn from it. These fathers knew Christ by the inward teaching of his word and Spirit, whereby he made himself known to them, as he does not

to others. For he fulfilled to them the great promise of the new covenant—'I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God,' Jer. xxiv. 7. The covenant is well ordered in all things and sure, particularly with respect to the quickening of the soul from a death in trespasses and sins, and to the renewing of its faculties, that they may be capable of knowing God, and to the enlightening them, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may shine unto them, even unto the heart, enlivening it with holy and heavenly affection to the person, to the offices, and to the glories of the blessed Immanuel. Whereby the believer, thus taught of God to know him aright, can now trust him, hope in him, and love him; which graces are strengthened from the consideration of God's standing related to him as his covenant-God, and of his being one of God's redeemed people: from which relation he has a right to, and by faith may enjoy, every covenant-mercy in time, and shall be a partaker of them all in eternity. This is the knowledge, concerning which so many and such great things are spoken in Scripture, and which St. John says these fathers had received: they had attained by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to that knowledge of Christ, which is life eternal: and the same Spirit enabled them to be continually growing and increasing in the knowledge of Christ. As he shines more clearly into their hearts, he discovers to them more of their wants. He makes them better acquainted with themselves, and lets them feel more of the workings of their corrupt nature, and of their own entire helplessness. Thus by his light they see deeper into that mystery of iniquity, which is in them, and they grow in the sense and experience of it all their lives. Day by day some failing, short-coming, infirmity, or temptation, leads them to more lowly and humbling views of themselves, and brings them fresh discoveries of their fallen and helpless state. While they attend to what is passing in their own breasts, every moment something will be speaking for Christ—'Without me ye can do nothing.' It is this abiding sense of their wants, and faith in his promises to supply them, which lead them to be constantly looking unto Jesus. Many wants do not discourage them, for his promises are as many as their wants can be—nor great wants, for he has given them exceeding great promises—nor continual wants, for he has promised them grace every moment. As they grow in the knowledge of themselves, they see more need of living upon Christ in the

several offices which he sustains. The daily experience which they have of their own ignorance, and sinfulness, and helplessness, endear to them their divine Prophet, Priest, and King. The continual sense of their want of him makes them glad to live in a settled fixed dependence upon his fulness, and to be always receiving out of it. They would not live otherwise if they could. They know that their dear Saviour will manage better for them than they for themselves. He has taken their affairs spiritual and temporal into his hands, and he can make no mistakes. His infinite love is guided by unerring wisdom, and its blessings are bestowed by almighty power. Happy for them, they and theirs are under the care of this best of friends. They know it, and are sensible of their happiness. Daily experience brings them fresh proofs of the love and power of Jesus; which makes them wish for more, still more faith, that they may glorify their blessed Saviour by trusting him more. However in this they are growing, increasing day by day in their knowledge of the salvation, and gaining a closer acquaintance and fellowship with the person of God their Saviour, until they come to see him as he is.

This is the character of those believers who are steadfast in the faith, and are become fathers, able now to teach others also. They have attained to that knowledge of Christ, which is life eternal, and they are daily pressing forward: what they already know of him increases their desire to know more. And by being always conversant with him (for without him they can do nothing,) they have continual opportunities of making new discoveries. In him are laid up treasures of every thing that is great and good. His riches are unsearchable, infinite, and eternal: there is no coming to the end of them. Believers are persuaded of it, and therefore they try to dig deep into this golden mine. It is all theirs. The farther they go, the more is their faith strengthened, and the more precious Christ becomes; for they find such an excellency in the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord, that their souls hunger and thirst to know more of him. The more they attain, the more the appetite increases, and nothing can perfectly satisfy it, but the full enjoyment of Christ in glory, when they shall know even as also they are known; till that blessed time come, they will be growing in grace, and in the knowledge of God their Saviour.

This is the distinguishing mark of these fathers—they are pressing forward. They have not yet attained to the perfect

knowledge of Christ, but they are going on to perfection: and they make a happy progress. God meets them in and blesses the means which he has appointed for their daily growth. In those he requires them to depend and to wait upon him, and he gives them clearer discoveries of the adorable person, and of the gracious offices of the Lord Christ, and thereby enables them to live more by faith upon him, for all things belonging to their temporal, their spiritual, and their eternal concerns. These particulars will include the principal acts of the life of faith, and while we take a short view of them, may every page, reader, be made the means of increasing and strengthening thy faith in the Lord Jesus.

First, They grow in the knowledge of his person, which is altogether wonderful; so that they can never come to the end of his perfections, nor to eternity can they shew forth all his praise; for he is God and man in one Christ—Jehovah incarnate—Immanuel, God with us.—This is the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh: in which he came amongst us that he might be the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven; that as the first Adam by sin had ruined all those who are born of him after the flesh, so the second Adam might save all those who are born of him after the Spirit. And for this end he has all power in heaven and earth committed to him, he has all fulness, yea, the fulness of the godhead dwelling in him, that he might be the head of the body the church, and that out of his fulness his members might be receiving grace in time and glory in eternity. Of this divine Person all the prophets have spoken since the world began; and what they have spoken in many words the apostle sums up in a short description, Col. i. 15, &c. Where he is treating of that Person in the godhead, who covenanted to come into the world to save sinners; 'Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers; all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence; for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.' In which words these three glorious truths are declared of Christ Jesus: first, that he created all things visible and invisible; secondly, that he upholds them all by the word of his power; thirdly, that he

has redeemed unto himself a peculiar people through his own blood, who are his church, and he is to them what the head is to the body, the head of authority, the first in rank and dignity, and the head of influence, from whom life and motion and sense are communicated to all his members: for in him they live and move and have their being. In all things he is first, or has the pre-eminence, he is Jehovah the Creator and the Preserver of all things, Jehovah incarnate, the head of his church, and the Saviour of the body. This is the blessed object of faith: and what can there be conceived beautiful, useful, or happy, what excellency is there or perfection, which is not in its highest degree in this most adorable God-man! what can a believer want, what can his heart desire, which is not here treasured up for his use? Here is a surety perfectly qualified, as man to act and suffer for man, as God to merit infinitely and eternally by what he did and suffered, and as God-man he has now all fulness of wisdom and righteousness, and holiness, and strength, and every thing needful for his people's happiness: whither then should they go, but to him, for every grace and blessing? And to him they do repair, according to the command—'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth,' Isa. xlv. 22. The promise to them who are looking unto him is very extensive—'My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus,' Phil. iv. 19. By him they expect a continual supply of all their temporal and spiritual needs, and therefore on him they would have their eyes ever fixed, looking unto Jesus: while by faith their eyes are kept steady upon him, they will be discovering something new in this wonderful God-man, and receiving something out of his fulness to strengthen their hopes, and to inflame their affections. He will grow more lovely in their sight, fresh beauties will discover themselves, new worlds of delight will appear: for all the glories of heaven and earth shine in their fullest lustre in his person. The believer sees them at present: for by faith he can see Him that is invisible, and although he has not such a perfect vision, as they have who, standing round his throne, see him face to face, yet he hopes to enjoy it soon: and he has even now this peculiar pleasure in viewing the glories of his God and Saviour, that he can truly say of him—'This is my beloved, and my friend,' here I fix, and on him I rest; I want to look no where else for any good, since it all meets and centres in one object; for it hath pleased the Father, and the eternal Spirit, that all fulness should dwell in the Son of God, and

he is my beloved Saviour, and my dearest friend; he is the chief among ten thousand in my affection, yea, is altogether lovely. The more I live by faith upon him, the more I love him: for I experience such tender compassion in his heart, and such a kind concern for me and my interest, that the love of Christ constrains me to love him again. He endears his person to me by continual favours. I do love him, but not so much as he deserves. I would increase and abound more and more in love to him, as his mercies increase and abound to me; but a grateful sense of them, and love to him for them, are his own gifts; for which, as well as for his mercies, I must be content to be indebted to him for ever and ever. Lord, shed more of thy precious love abroad in my heart; enlarge it in true affection to thee, and make all that is within me bless thy holy name.

Reader, stop a little here, and consider. Art thou one of these believers; hast thou a warm heart for the person of Christ? Dost thou see in him, and in its highest degree, every thing that is lovely, and art thou growing and abounding in love to him? If this be thy present happiness, thou wilt find many powerful motives to increase it in the 45th and 72d Psalms. Read them, and see whether thou canst so mix faith with what is said in them of the incarnate God, as to conclude with David—'Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.' If thy heart be thus enamoured with his love, then thou hast got a key to the book of Canticles; for thou art the spouse of Christ. Mayest thou experience what is therein said of the glories of thy heavenly Bridegroom, and mayest thou grow in love to his adorable person, by finding continual tokens of his love to thy soul in the several offices, which he sustains for the dispensing of his favours. In these offices he is always endearing himself to his people. And this is the

Second thing, whereby the fathers in Christ grow in the knowledge of him. There is not a want which sin has brought upon believers, but there is an office in Christ, where it may be supplied: and the sense and feeling of that want, leading them to trust in him upon the warrant of his word and promise, will certainly bring them a supply in the hour of need. His offices are many, but they may be all included in these five. He is the Saviour, the Prophet, the Priest, the King, and the Advocate of his people.

The Saviour, Jesus, a dear name, descriptive of his infinite grace, and sweetly suited to the sinner's wants. Whatever

pollution or guilt he has contracted, whatever misery he deserves to suffer in time or in eternity, Jesus is Jehovah, almighty to save: for he was called Jesus, because he was to save his people from their sins. Whatever they stand in need of to make them happy, wisdom, righteousness, holiness, comfort, or strength, it is all in the fulness of Jesus, freely promised, and by faith received, as it is written, 'Ye are saved freely by grace through faith,' and saved for ever: for Jesus is the author of eternal salvation. The spirits of just men made perfect in glory, are said to be crying with a loud voice, 'Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.' So that the name of Jesus is dear and precious to the saints in heaven; they are happily employed in ascribing the glory of their eternal salvation to the Lamb of God. And the believer has at present a part of their happiness: for Jesus is the Saviour. He can trust him for all the promised blessings of his salvation, and live by faith upon him for the receiving them. As every moment some of them are wanted, so the Saviour's love in bestowing them is more experienced; faith in him is thereby strengthened, and love to him increased. And these graces will be continually growing, while the believer views the state of guilt and misery, from which Jesus has saved him, the state of safety in which he has placed him, and the blessings which he has promised him in life and death, and in eternity. Must not such a Saviour become more precious for continuing day by day such free and unmerited benefits? And who can receive them, sensible of his unworthiness, without rejoicing in such a salvation, and admiring and adoring the goodness of the Saviour? O most blessed Jesus, increase the faith of thy people, that they may glorify thee more by depending upon thee for all the promised blessings of thy salvation. Teach them how to do this as the great

PROPHET of the house of God. This is another of his gracious offices, suited to the ignorance of his people: for when sin separated them from God, they then lost the light of life, and had no means left in their own power to discover God and the things of God. Hear what two infallible witnesses say to this fact—'There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.' Mind, here is no exception, the prophet knew not one: neither did the apostle—All the gentiles had the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts. To man in this state of

ignorance what could be so suitable as a prophet? And what prophet like him, who, being God, is possessed of infinite wisdom, and being God-man has that infinite wisdom, that by his divine teaching he might enlighten their understandings, and by leading them into all truth, might make them wise unto salvation. He begins his teaching with discovering to them their ignorance, which is a hard lesson to learn, but he uses such mildness and gentleness with his authority, that by degrees he subdues their pride and makes them willing to sit at his feet to hear his words. This is the humble posture of all his true disciples. They receive him by faith for their teacher, convinced that without him they can learn nothing which belongs to their peace, and having been some time under his teaching, they grow more sensible of their want of it. He discovers to them more of their ignorance, and thereby brings them to a closer dependence upon him for wisdom. And that is the way they rise in his school. Whoever is the most humble and teachable, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The abiding sense of his standing in need of the divine Prophet every moment makes him the highest scholar. And the Lord keeps him in this dependent state, waiting upon him for his continual instruction, in hearing and reading the word, and in prayer for the enlightening Spirit to make the word effectual. The great Prophet could teach without these means, but he has commanded us in the use of them to wait upon him: for in them he has promised to meet and bless his people, and for the fulfilling of this promise they wait. Christ's presence they look for in the use of all means, and they find it. He teaches them, how liable they are to err, how little they know, how soon they forget, and thus they grow in a dependence upon, and in love to, their divine Teacher. And as all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in him, and they can know at present but in part, they therefore will be waiting upon him for more, still more knowledge, and he answers his character, he teaches them wisdom. He shews them dangers, discovers to them the devices of Satan, guards them against the errors and heresies of the day, makes manifest the snares of the world, and in all respects fulfils to them the office of an infallible prophet: for he keeps them from resting upon any false foundation, and enables them to build all their hopes of acceptance with God upon the atonement made by the high

Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. This is his chief office. He is our prophet to teach us our guilty helpless

state, and to bring us to rely upon him to save us from it, by being our priest. All we have sinned, and incurred the pains and penalties due to sin. We are all justly liable to the sufferings and death, to the curse and to the separation from God, threatened in his law to transgressors, and we have no means in our power to escape them. How full then of grace and love was the heart of our blessed Immanuel, that he would vouchsafe to be a priest, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin? His gifts were infinitely precious—he gave himself for us, the gift of his eternal godhead, the gift of his immaculate manhood, body and soul, in which he obeyed perfectly, and so magnified the law, that it may be eternally honourable in admitting those, who have sinned, into heaven—the gift of his prevailing prayer for all that shall believe in him to the end of the world—and the gift of his body and soul to be once offered for sin, in the place and in the stead of sinners, as it is written, 'He suffered once for sins the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God—He died for our sins according to the Scriptures—He was made a curse for us, that he might redeem us from the curse of the law, and that we, who sometimes were afar off, might be made nigh by his blood, and might through him have access by one Spirit unto the Father. In these most precious gifts, in this everlastingly-meritorious sacrifice, consists the office of our divine Priest; and upon him the believer rests. He is enabled upon this foundation to build all his hopes of acceptance. The great atonement made by Jesus' obedience unto death is all his salvation and all his desire—all his salvation: for he looks no where else, but to Jesus, and him crucified; he depends upon nothing else to save him from suffering and death, from the curse of the law, and from being eternally separated from God. And this is all his desire—to get a closer acquaintance and more intimate communion with the crucified Jesus. This is his one study and delight—I have determined, says he, to know nothing but Jesus, by whom I have now received the atonement. God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ. I would look upon all other things as dross and dung, compared with the excellency of the knowledge of that one offering, by which he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. In this his priestly office, bleeding and dying for me, he is beyond description, beyond conception, full of grace and truth; and daily he becomes more lovely in mine eyes. As I discover more of the exceeding sinfulness of my heart and life, my meritorious Priest grows more dear to me; I rest more safely on

his atonement, satisfied of its infinite sufficiency to bring me near to God: and finding my faith and hopes established in it, and through it a free access to the Father, Jesus the Lamb of God becomes day by day more precious to my heart. His blood and righteousness are the continual rejoicing of my soul. Oh! how happy am I in this my royal Priest: for now, even now, have I redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins—I am safe from the destroying angel under the blood of sprinkling, and I have also boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Daily do I experience more of the riches of his grace, comforting, strengthening, and sanctifying me through faith in his most precious blood. Through this he saves me from hell, through this he bestows upon me heaven, and for this shall be my song of everlasting praise. Unto him who hath thus exceedingly loved me, and hath washed me from my sins in his own blood, and hath made me, the vilest of sinners, a king and a priest (amazing grace!) unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

These are the breathings of the believing soul, now become well grounded upon the atonement, and living upon the priestly office of the Lord Jesus Christ, for peace and joy, and expecting to be established in them continually by his power, which makes another of his offices necessary; for some corruption or enemy, temptation or trouble, will be always trying to draw the eye of faith from looking unto Jesus, the high-priest of our profession; and such is the believer's helplessness, that he could not be fixed a moment, was not Jesus a high-priest upon his throne, almighty to make all his enemies his footstool, and to rule in and over his people as their

KING. In this relation he exceedingly endears himself to them: for they are in themselves weak and helpless. They are without strength to resist the least temptation, or to overcome the weakest enemy. They cannot of themselves subdue one corruption, or get the victory over a single lust. Neither can they perform one act of spiritual life. They cannot make nor keep themselves alive to God by any power of their own: for without Christ they can do nothing. Most mercifully then is his kingly office suited to their weakness. He is the great king over all the earth, as God; but he has a peculiar rule in and over believers as God-man, the Head of the body of the church; to which he is connected by as close and near a bond, as the members of the body are with the head. He is the first in dignity, as the head is, and in all things has the pre-emi-

nence: and what the natural head is to its members, the same he is to the members of his spiritual body: for he is the Head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. And for the ministering of proper nourishment and influence to his members, he has all power in heaven and earth in his hand. He is the Lord God omnipotent, whose kingdom ruleth over all. It is not an outward thing, like the kingdoms of the world; but, says he, the kingdom of God is within you. He sets it up within, in the hearts of his people, and there he sways the sceptre of his grace, subduing all the evils within and conquering all the enemies without, by his almighty arm. He takes them and theirs under his royal protection, and manages all their matters for them, until he brings them, by his power, unto eternal salvation. The power is his; but by faith it becomes theirs. When they find themselves helpless and without strength, then they look up to him to make them strong in the Lord, and by faith rest upon his promised strength, and thereby receive whatever degree of it is needful at that time. Thus they live by faith upon their almighty King, and they glorify him by trusting in him for strength. By daily experience they become more sensible of their weakness, and learn to live more out of themselves upon him. They find the safety, the comfort of this. They see it is far better for them to be dependent upon Christ, that his power may rest upon them, than that they should be strong in themselves: and therefore they rejoice, they take pleasure in their own weakness, because it illustrates and magnifies the power of Christ, who does all for them, and in them.

Hear one of these happy believers thus describing his case: I was caught up, says he, into the third heavens, into paradise, and I heard there unspeakable words, which it is not possible for a man to utter; and, lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure; for this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that he would take it away from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee—my grace is sufficient to sanctify this cross, and to support thee under it; it will be for my glory and for thy good it should be continued; because my strength is made perfect in weakness—the weaker thou art, the more will thy strength be magnified in bearing thee up, until faith and patience have their perfect work. This divine answer from my Lord and

King satisfied me, and I have for fourteen years had sweet experience of the truth of it. I am a witness to the all-sufficiency of Jesus' grace; but never have I found so much of it, as when I have been the most helpless in myself; and therefore most gladly will I glory in my infirmities and weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me, that his power may be continually glorified by my depending upon him for it; and that I may have fresh evidence of Christ's power working mightily in me. Since the Lord is thus become my strength, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake, in whatever I suffer for him and his cause: for when I am weak then am I strong,—weak in myself, strong in the Lord; stronger in him the more sensible I am of my own weakness, and then strongest of all, when, finding I can do nothing, I live by faith upon him to do all for me. In this state of weakness and dependence, I glory, I take perfect pleasure in it; because it honours the kingly office of my Lord Christ, and makes it plain to myself and others, that he keeps me every moment by his mighty power; for since I can do nothing, the excellency of the power which does all in me and by me, appears evidently to be of God, and not of man.

Reader, is not this a happy case? Is not that man blessed whose strength is in the Lord, and who can say in faith, Surely in the Lord have I strength! And what hinders thee from being as strong in the Lord as Paul was? Thou hast the same promises, the same God and Saviour to fulfil them; and, for thy greater encouragement to live upon him by faith, for the fulfilling of them to thee, he has another office, in which he condescends to be thy

Advocate, freely to take thy cause in hand, and to see it carried in the court of heaven. In this character he would represent himself, as having undertaken to answer all charges against thee, from whatever quarter they come, and to obtain for thee every blessing promised in his word, and for which thou appliest to him by faith in the time of need. In this amiable light he would have thee to consider him as thy daysman, to whom, being thy Saviour and thy Friend, thou mayest safely refer thy cause, as the Mediator between God and man, who will transact all thy matters for thee with the Father, and as thy Intercessor, who appears in the presence of God for thee, that every blessing of his salvation may be thine. Under these names the Scripture describes the advocateship of the Lord Christ, which office he sustains for thy sake, to encou-

rage thee to come with boldness to the throne of his grace. Thou hast a friend there, who is bound by his word, and also by his office, to see that thou want no manner of thing which is good: and although all things seem to make against thee, and thou canst find no human means of obtaining the promised good, which thou wantest, then look up to the Lord Jesus. Thou wilt glorify him at such a time, if thou canst trust in his intercession, and if the workings of thy faith be such as these—

Although I am less than the least of God's mercies, a vile sinner, and to this moment an unprofitable servant, deserving for my very best works and duties to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord; yet, glory be to his infinite grace, I have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for my sins. All the blessings which he has promised to give his dear people, as their Saviour, their Prophet, Priest, and King, he is my Advocate with the Father to obtain for me. A righteous Advocate, who asks nothing but what he has a right to, and who never asks in vain. It hath pleased the Father, that all fullness should dwell in the Head of the body, the church, and it pleaseth him that the members should, from the fulness of their Head, receive abundantly all the influence they want: for the Father himself loveth them, and out of his infinite love gave his Son to be their head, that he might fill all in all of them. What then may not I expect from such an Advocate, with such a Father? Already have I received so much that I know Jesus appears in the presence of God for me. I can trust my cause in his hands. He has taught me to leave all my matters to his management, and I desire more simply to resign them up to him. I find every thing goes on well which is left to his direction, and nothing miscarries but what I undertake without him. O for more faith! The Lord increase it, that my precious Advocate may be more glorified by my trusting him more, and that he may have all the honour of conducting my affairs, spiritual and temporal, in earth and heaven, in time and in eternity; even so be it, Lord Jesus.

After the believer has been taught thus to trust the Lord Jesus Christ, and to expect that grace which in his several offices he is engaged to give, then his conversation will be well ordered; and as he daily grows in faith and dependence upon Christ, he will walk more in the comfort of the Holy Ghost: his outward as well as inward matters will come under the influence of grace, and will be left to the direction

and government of the Lord Jesus, which is another excellency of the life of faith, and which renders it infinitely preferable to any other way of living.

The state of the case is this: Christ has all power in heaven and earth given unto him. As God-man he has a mediatorial kingdom, which ruleth over all created beings and things: for they subsist by the word of his power, and are upheld by his providence: so that whatever, in his infinite love and wisdom, he sees best for his people, he is almighty to bestow it on them. They can want no promised good, nor suffer any outward evil; but he is able to give the one, and to deliver from the other. Their wants are many, their sufferings great. Sin has brought disorder upon the whole creation. The outward state of man in the world is full of misery, not only following him, but also in him, in his very frame and constitution.—Pain, sickness, mortality in his body, emptiness in his enjoyments, disappointments, losses, worldly cares, something or other in body or estate troubling him: for man is born to trouble. What manner of love then is this that God our Saviour would take these things under his government, and manage them for the good of his people, whom he would have to be happy in him in this world, as well as in the next. He has given them many great and precious promises relating to the life that now is, and he is faithful who hath promised to supply their earthly wants, to sanctify their sufferings, and to make all things work together under him for their good. He has kindly undertaken their temporal as well as their spiritual concerns; for nothing was left out of the covenant of grace. It was ordered in ALL things. The outward state and condition of believers, their poverty or riches, health or sickness, trials of every kind, how great they should be, how long they should continue, are all appointed, and unalterably fixed; nothing left for chance to do. When the Lord God determined to bring many sons unto glory through Christ Jesus, the means, by which he intended to bring them unto that end, were in his purpose as well as the end itself; therefore all things were ordered and made sure, even to the very hairs of their head; for they are all numbered. What a continual source of comfort is this to believers: their present happiness is provided for as well as their eternal, in the covenant of grace. God is become their God, has made himself known to them in this covenant-relation, and has thereby bound himself to give whatever he sees will be best for them. But because he knoweth their frame, and how apt they are, under hard and

long trials of faith, to be discouraged, he has therefore made them many sweet temporal promises for their support. Lest they should be weary and faint in their minds, he has engaged to deliver them from all evil; 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.' Ps. xxxiv. 19. He delivers two ways, either by entirely removing the affliction, or by changing its nature: for he takes the curse out of it, and turns it into a real blessing, he makes it the means of increasing faith and patience, sweetens it with a sense of his presence, and demonstrates that it comes from love, by its increasing love to him in the heart of the righteous. This is the best deliverance, as one of the greatest sufferers for Christ witnesses, who, upon the mention of his afflictions, declares, 'Out of them all the Lord delivered me,' by saving me from the evil that was in them, and by making them yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

The Lord has also engaged to bestow upon believers all good: 'They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing,' Ps. xxxiv.10. Their loving Shepherd will see that they lack nothing, no good thing will be withheld from them. To the same purpose are the promises in the New Testament, Matt. vi. 33. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things, food and raiment, and all necessaries, shall be added unto you: I your God and Saviour give you my word for it; trust me, and you shall never want.' With confidence did he believe it, who said to the Philippians, iv. 19. 'My God shall supply ALL your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.' What a powerful motive is here for the strengthening of our faith, that, be our wants ever so many, ever so great, our God has engaged to supply them all! We may boldly then cast all our care upon him since he careth for us, and may rest assured of his managing our whole outward estate, infinitely better than we could for ourselves. What trouble, what burdens shall we be hereby eased of! What peace of mind shall we enjoy, when we can give up all our temporal concerns into the Lord's hands, and by faith see them all conducted for our good, by his infinite wisdom and almighty love? Blessed surely is the man who putteth his trust in the Lord his God. He is delivered from the anxious care of getting, and from the fear of losing what he has got: he is easy about the present, the future he leaves to the Lord: his conversation is without covetousness, and he is content with such things as he has, and thereby escapes

thousands of the common troubles of life. In this sweet peace he enjoys his soul, because the Lord has said to him, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee' in any state, or in any distress—I will ever be with thee to turn all things, seem they ever so afflicting, into real blessings. Trusting to this word, which cannot be broken, he may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me: let the world persecute me, my trade fail, poverty pinch me, sickness pain me, friends leave me, and all outward comforts forsake me, nevertheless I am a happy man. The Lord Christ is my all-sufficient portion still, and these things, being of his appointment, are for the best. I find them so, glory be to him. He makes them the means of weaning me from the world, deadening the old man of sin, bringing me to a more intimate acquaintance with himself, and to a greater experience of goodness to my soul; whereby he enables me to trust all things for eternity in his hands, who hath said unto me, and faithful is he that hath spoken, who also will do it, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'

But some may say, Are there any persons who live thus above the world, freed from its cares and fears, and troubles; Yes, thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift. He has promised to make all things to work together for good to them that love him, and he has had witnesses in every age of his faithfulness in fulfilling his promises. Read that little book of martyrs, Hebrews xi. and you will see how happy they were in God, not only in prosperity, but also when all the world was against them. Great were the triumphs of their faith. They chose to suffer affliction, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; they esteemed the reproach of Christ, and set more value upon it, than upon riches and honours. And we have a great cloud of witnesses in the New Testament, who rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ, who blessed their revilers, prayed for their persecutors, and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. Hear one of them speaking the sentiments of the rest: 'I account all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and I do account them but dung, that I may win Christ.' Still there are some among us of Paul's mind. The Lord hath not left himself without witness. We have a few names (may the Lord daily add to their number,) who can trust all their temporal affairs in the hands of Christ, and who find the happiness of having them

in his management. He does all things well for them; what would make them unhappy, he takes upon himself—'cast thy burden on the Lord,' says he, 'and he shall sustain thee,' and he does sustain the weight of it, and thereby frees them from anxious care, and gives them sweet content. They have enough, let them have ever so little of outward things, because they have got the Pearl of great price. Christ is theirs, and the Spirit of Christ enables them to make up all their happiness in him, and not in the things which perish in the using. Christ, with bread and water, is worth ten thousand worlds. Christ, with pain, is better than the highest pleasures of sin. Christ, with all outward sufferings, is matter of present and of eternal joy. Surely these are the only happy people living. Reader, art thou not one of them? Art thou not a partaker of their happiness? If thou art a believer, it is thy privilege; thy title to it is good, and thou enterest into possession by faith, and if it be so weak that thou art not so happy as they are, thou shouldest take shame to thyself for dishonouring God thy Saviour, for robbing him of his glory before men, and for injuring thine own soul, by not committing all thy outward matters unto his guidance. What could he do more than he has done, to encourage thee to leave them to him, that he might manage them for thee? He has given thee argument upon argument, promises in abundance, bonds which cannot be broken, immutable things, in which it is impossible that God should lie, to convince thee that thou mayest safely trust in him for all temporal things, which he knows will be for thy good. O pray then for more faith. Beg of the Lord to enable thee to walk more by faith, and less by sense, that thou mayest commit thy way entirely unto him, and he may direct all thy paths. The more thou trustest in him, the happier he will make thee. Therefore daily entreat him to deliver thee from taking any anxious thought for thy life, what thou shalt eat, or what thou shalt drink; or yet for thy body, what thou shalt put on. Since he knoweth thou hast need of all these things, and hast sent thee to the fowls of the air, and to the grass of the field, to see what a rich provision he makes for them; art thou not much better than they? Oh! pray still for the increase of faith, that all thy worldly matters being resigned, and given up into the hands of the Lord thy God, thou mayest be eased of many weights and burdens, and mayest run with more patience and joy the race that is set before thee.

As these fathers in Christ learn by daily experience to live

more upon him for the bread that perisheth, so do they for the bread that endureth unto everlasting life. They attain to a fixed settled dependence upon Christ for the conducting of all things belonging to their state of grace, to their comfortable walk in it, and to their finishing their course happily. They grow in the knowledge of those blessed truths, are more grounded and better established in them, and these being received and enjoyed by faith, do manifest the excellency of living by it above any other state, except that of glory.

First, they are pardoned and accepted in the beloved: in him partakers of every covenant-mercy; for he was made of God unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. His whole salvation is theirs. And this is their state of grace, into which he has brought them, and by faith put them into the present enjoyment of it.

This was largely treated of before, but cannot be too much insisted upon, both because there is growth in the knowledge of the covenant, and clearer evidence daily to be had of the believer's interest in it, and also because the love, and wisdom, and mercy in contriving, the power in executing, the grace in applying, the blessings of the covenant, are all infinite. The height and depth, the length and breadth, of those divine perfections cannot be fully comprehended. They surpass knowledge; so that if a believer knows a great deal of the way of salvation, yet there is still more, far more to be known. So long as he lives he must be learning; waiting upon the divine Prophet for his inward teaching, and he will become more dependent upon him the more he learns: for the wiser he grows, the clearer views will he have of his having attained as yet but little wisdom, which makes him press forward. He believes, that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are laid up in Christ, and he longs for more knowledge of his gracious undertakings, of his adorable person, and of his full and free salvation. He follows on to know the Lord. He advances from one degree to another, from faith to faith, and is not satisfied with any discovery, until that which is in part be done away, and he shall know even as also he is known.

The believer, being thus satisfied that he is in a safe state, looks up to the Lord to keep him and enable him to walk comfortably in it, which is another excellency of the life of faith. All things are well ordered in the covenant for every step he is to take: all treasured up in the fulness of Christ, and by faith received out of it. The believer has many enemies opposing him in his way heavenwards; but in Christ he has

strength sufficient to conquer them all, and does conquer them. His worst enemy, that gives him most uneasiness, is indwelling sin, which is never at rest, like the troubled sea, always casting up some of its filthy motions and corruptions; so that when he is in prayer, it is ever trying to amuse and distract the mind with a thousand vain and idle thoughts, to weaken faith by its carnal reasonings and doubts, or when he is in any holy duty, it is ever present with him to hinder him from doing it so perfectly as he would. Over this enemy there is no victory but by faith. The old man of sin defies all strength, except that which is almighty, and therefore this the Lord has promised; and these believers had experience of his faithfulness, whose iniquities he had pardoned, and who declared, Mich. vii. 19. 'He will subdue our iniquities.' He will do it: he is engaged by promise, by office, it is his glory to save his people from the dominion of their sins. On him therefore they depend for continual victory, and according to their faith so it is done unto them. While they fight against sin, relying on the strength of their almighty King, they always conquer. His arm subdues the strongest lust; but if they attack the weakest without him they are infallibly conquered. And this has so often happened to those fathers that knew him that is from the beginning, that now they never dare go down to battle, but with their eyes upon the Lord. He has taught them to depend wholly upon him for the crucifying of the old man of sin, day by day, and in the power of his might armies of lusts are made to flee before them. The Captain of their salvation encourages them to fight on, not only by subduing sin in them, but also by making this the earnest of their having in him an absolute mortification of sin. By faith they see it, and his victorious grace will never leave them until he put them into full possession of it. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ their Lord, ere long they shall have perfect and everlasting victory over the whole body and being of sin. And

As the old man is thus crucified, so is the new man quickened by the power of Jesus, received by faith, according to what is written, 'The just shall live by faith.' The justified person by his union with Christ is a partaker of the grace of life, and in virtue of this union he lives upon Christ as a member does in the body, and thereby he has communion with the Father by the bond of the Spirit; and this spiritual life is begun and carried on by faith: it is a life of faith, not as if faith quickened a dead sinner; for Christ is our life.

But the sense and comfort, and strength of that life which Christ gives, are received by faith, and these are according as faith is. If faith be weak, so are they: as it grows, so do they. Which discovers to us another wonderful excellency of the life of faith, since by it we now partake of spiritual and eternal life: 'For he that believeth hath everlasting life,' hath it now, is already passed from death unto life, and he looks up to the Lord and giver of it for every thing needful, and expects it out of his fulness. Hear one of these happy believers thus relating his case. I am dead to the law, says he, yet alive to God; I am crucified with Christ, and am a partaker of the merit and power of his cross, and by faith I have in him an absolute crucifixion of sin; and although the old man is thus crucified, yet the new man liveth: nevertheless I live, yet not I—I live a spiritual life, yet not I as a natural man, I did not quicken myself: I cannot keep myself alive, Christ liveth in me, he is the author of my life, and on him I depend for the continuance of it in time and in eternity; for the life which I now live in the flesh, while I am in this body of sin and death, I live by the faith of the Son of God: he is the author, he is the object of that faith, by which I have received life from him: by an act of sovereign grace he quickened me from a death in trespasses and sins, and united me as a living member unto his mystical body, and I am kept alive through his living, acting, and working in me by his Spirit; he dwelleth in my heart by faith, and the more clearly I see this, the more do I love and enjoy the Prince of life, my precious, above all expression, infinitely, eternally precious Jesus, who loved me and gave himself for me, that by his death, I might be dead to sin, and by his resurrection might live to and with God for ever and ever. Thanks and praise be to thee without ceasing, thou dear Lamb of God, for thy love to me the chief of sinners. Let all thy people say, Amen.

This is the happy case of those believers, who are like the blessed Paul, strong in the Lord Christ. By his death they are dead to sin, and because he liveth they are alive to God: for they who are joined to the Lord are one spirit. And as their faith increases, they have more spiritual fellowship with Christ in his death and resurrection, not only in the merit, but also in the efficacy of both. They grow more dependent upon the Lord's strength, and he daily mortifies in them the old man of sin, and as he grows weaker their other enemies have less power over them. By their lusts Satan tempts them; the more these are mortified, the weaker will be his temptations.

By their lusts, by the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, the world tempts them; as these are subdued, they will be more crucified to the world. Christ living, dwelling, and reigning in them by faith, will day by day weaken the strength of sin and Satan, and the world; and by the power of his death and resurrection he will be conforming them more to his own image and likeness. He will by faith enable them to be growing up into him in all things, as long as they live. They will be going on from strength to strength, till sin and death be swallowed up in victory.

Until that happy time come, he has appointed certain means, in the use of which they are to wait for the continual receiving of grace from him to deaden the old man, and for the growth of the new. And this grace they receive, not merely because they use the means, but because they use them in faith, expecting his presence in, and blessing upon them. Believers set the Lord always before them, and look through the means at him; for without him they are good for nothing: but when observed, according to his mind and will, as acts of trust in his promise, and of dependence upon his faithfulness, then they answer the end for which they were instituted, and become the means of spiritual communion with him. And thus legal duties become Christian privileges. One of these means is attendance on public worship, the ground and reason for which is Christ's promise, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'—Two or three believers make a church, when they are gathered together in the name of Christ's divinity. By faith they expect the fulfilling of his promise, and his presence in the midst of them; and they are then most spiritual worshippers, when they are looking most unto Jesus, and enjoying communion with him. What are their prayers but acts of faith and dependence? 'Whatsoever ye shall ask (says Christ) in my name, believing, ye shall receive.' Which words shew us that prayer is nothing worth, unless it be presented in Christ's name, and in faith relying on Christ's promise to hear and answer. The object of prayer is the godhead in three persons. The address to each is in their covenant-offices, and the petitions to each should be according as they stand related to sinners in those offices, and the communion with the divine Persons is thus expressed: 'Through Christ Jesus we have an access by one Spirit unto the Father;' and whatever we ask, believing, we receive. What is believers hearing the word? Is it not a continual dependence upon their divine

Teacher to make his word spirit and life unto their souls? They expect his presence to enable them to mix faith with what they hear, and then they grow thereby. What is their keeping the Lord's day? Is it not to express their belief of his being risen, and entered into his rest, and of their having, by believing, entered into rest also, and therefore they wait upon Christ in the ordinances to keep them, until he bring them to his eternal sabbath, to that rest which remaineth for the people of God. What is their attendance upon the Lord's supper? Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ, and the communion of the body of Christ, a real partaking by faith of his broken body, and of his precious blood-shedding, and of all the benefits of his passion? In these and all other ways of God's appointment, they expect Christ's presence, and therefore they go to them with gladness of heart to meet him. He is the dear object of their love, and he grows more lovely by every day's experience. They taste and see more how gracious he is, and therefore to converse with him in prayer, and to be in his company in the ordinances, becomes more sweet and delightful to them. Oh! what happy moments do they therein spend! All the great, rich, and pleasant things in the world, are less than nothing compared to this joy. Communion with Christ is heaven begun; and by faith they enjoy it, and nothing can rob them of it but sin; which makes them careful in their life and conversation to please their gracious Lord. They depend upon him to teach them his will, and to give them strength to perform it, that they may walk before him in all well-pleasing. Whatever is opposite to his will they dread, because it would deprive them of their greatest blessing, even communion with their best and bosom Friend. Sin, viewed in this light, is blacker and viler than all the devils in hell. The love of Christ shews sin in its exceeding sinfulness, and faith, working by love to Christ, gains daily victory over it. He who has the love of Christ in his heart will be thereby sweetly constrained to fight against, and powerfully enabled to conquer, sin, so that it cannot separate him from his beloved Saviour; nay, it shall make him live in closer and nearer connexion. The motions of sin within, and temptations without, to which he is continually liable, will shew him the necessity of living in a settled dependence upon the grace and strength of the Captain of his salvation, who will lead him on conquering and to conquer, until he make him at last more than conqueror.

The same faith, working by love, has gained the hearts and

affections of believers over to the interest of holiness, and the commandments now cease to be grievous. Love to Christ, who is perfect righteousness and holiness, cannot consist with the hatred of either: nay, they are renewed after his image in both, and renewed in knowledge, that they might know his precious image, and renewed in heart, that they might love it; therefore being thus created anew in Christ Jesus, they will certainly, in the inner man, delight in righteousness and true holiness. He has shed his love abroad in their hearts, has won them to himself, and now nothing is dearer to them than that everlasting righteousness by which he justifies them, and that true holiness of which they are become partakers in him, which they evidenced, by a holy walk, and in which he will present them holy and unblameable and unrebukable before the Father. Thus he has perfectly secured the interest of holiness and the glory of the most holy God; for they are his workmanship, created unto good works, to love them, to do them, to walk in them as the way to the kingdom, and they live by faith upon Christ's strength for will and power to do them, and upon his intercession for the acceptance of them, laying them all upon the golden altar that sanctifieth the gifts. Thus their whole dependence is upon Christ. He is all and in all of their Christian walk. To him they look for every thing needful, to enable them to glorify God in their lives, and to shew forth the virtues of him that hath called them: on his grace they rely, that their conversation may be as becometh the gospel of Christ, and that they may adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things; and they find in him a sufficiency of grace, yea, they can do all things, and suffer all things, through Christ strengthening them. Whatever difficulties they meet with in the way of duty, leaning upon their Beloved, he carries them through all: whatever temptations, I will be with thee, says he, in the hour of temptation, look unto me, and thou shalt be saved: whatever enemies, Fear them not, says he, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness: whatever sorrows, Your sorrows, says he, shall be turned into joy, and your joy no man taketh from you: whatever sickness, I will strengthen thee upon the bed of languishing, and I will make all thy bed in thy sickness: whatever poverty, I will be a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress: whatever persecution, Blessed are ye, says he, who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, I pro-

nounce you, I will make you blessed. Thus Christ is with them, and none of the evils or miseries of life can separate them from him. He keeps them safe, and carries them through all their trials by his mighty power, and they, trusting in him, find that he makes all things work together for their good. What a blessed life is this! Surely there is none like it; for the life of faith is glory begun. The privileges, the happiness of it, are greater than can be described. The strongest believer upon earth, may daily know more, and may experience far more of the comfort of walking by faith, because as they grow more established in it, they will be receiving more power over sin, and will walk nearer to God. Having but one object to look unto, and to live upon, for all things, here they will be quietly settled. What can so effectually keep them from being tossed to and fro, as to have all fulness treasured up for their use in Christ, and to be brought to a fixed dependence upon this fulness, and to live upon it for all things belonging to life and godliness? Hereby sweet peace will be established within, and there will be a regular walk in the outward conversation. The whole man will experience what the Lord has promised to his redeemed people, 'I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble.' He leads them by his Spirit, and causes them to walk by the rivers of waters, where there are abundant streams of grace continually flowing, and he guides them in a straight way, that they shall not stumble nor err therein; but shall be kept happily to the end of their course, and shall finish it to their everlasting joy. And

This is another inestimable privilege of believers. Christ has engaged to keep them unto the end; and, having begun a good work in them, he has promised never to leave it until it be finished. What a strengthening is this to their faith, and what a glory does it put upon the whole life of faith, that it is a life which cannot perish? Believers have in them the immortal seed of eternal life. This is the crown of all; for how will this bear them up under crosses, support them in troubles, carry them on in their warfare against the flesh, the devil, and the world, and make them defy all dangers, yea, death itself, since they are assured, from the mouth of God their Saviour, that none shall pluck them out of his hands. They do not trust themselves, or have any dependence upon grace received, but they rely upon the faithfulness and power of Jesus, who has given them abundant evidence, that he will water them with his grace every moment, and hold them up

by his strength, and they shall be safe. How confident were believers of this in the Old Testament: one of them, who had attained this assurance of faith, says, 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:' and he, with many others, who had obtained like precious faith with him, declare—'This is our God for ever, he will be our guide even unto death.' They were sure he would be their God, and would follow them with mercy, and guide them, and do them good in life and death. To the same purpose our Lord has promised believers, 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.' How confidently did he trust in Christ for the fulfilling of this blessed promise, who said, 'I am fully persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Oh! sweet words of comfort! how happy was Paul in this assurance of faith! It is thy privilege, believer, as well as his. Thou hast the same promises that he had, the same God to fulfil them, and thy faith ought to be growing until thou be assured that no creature, not all the powers on earth, nor the gates of hell, can separate thee from Christ. They may as soon get into heaven and cut off Christ's right hand, which is impossible, as cut off one of the members of Christ's mystical body.

If thou art ready to say, I see clearly how I should glorify my dear Lord, and how happy I should be, if my faith was but like Paul's in this point; but I am so weak and liable to fall, and mine enemies so numerous and mighty, that I sometimes fear I shall never be able to hold out unto the end. Because thou art such, therefore the Lord has given thee his promise that he will hold thee up, and thou shalt be safe. And this promise is part of the covenant, which is ordered in all things, and sure. Look at that, and not at thyself. Consider the Messenger of the covenant, in whom it is all ordered, and by whom it is sure. When thy unfaithfulness would discourage thee, think of his faithfulness. Let thy weakness remind thee of his strength. If indeed he leave thee a single moment thou wilt fall: but he has promised, I will *never* leave thee. If the number and strength of thine enemies make thee fear, lest thou shouldst one day perish by the hand of Saul, he says to thee, Thou shalt be kept by the power of

'God through faith unto salvation. But if thou art tempted to doubt, finding thy revolting heart apt to turn from the Lord, 'I will put my fear (says he) into thy heart, that thou shalt not depart from me.' Observe, it is his faithfulness and power, and not thine, which is to keep thee, and has covenanted to do it, and he has all power in heaven and earth, and he has given thee promise for the establishment of thy faith, that thou mightest be certain he will love thee and keep thee unto the end. And when he has brought thee to a certainty of it, then thy comfort will be full. Christ will be magnified in thee, now he has made thee one of those fathers, who have known him that is from the beginning. He has taught thee so to know him, as to trust him for all things, and in all times. This is his crown and glory. He has enthroned himself in thy heart, as thy perfect Saviour, and his kingdom is within thee, even righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Now thy calling and election are sure. Thou knowest that he is faithful who hath promised to keep thee, who will also do it. And having this assurance of faith, attended with the rejoicing of hope, and being sealed with the blessed Spirit to the day of redemption, surely thou art a happy man, thrice happy, whom the Lord has thus highly favoured. How infinitely indebted art thou to his grace! Oh! what thanks and praises dost thou owe, more than thou canst ever pay, for what he has already done for thee! and yet this is only the dawning of the perfect day. His present favours are only earnests and pledges of what he will hereafter give thee. Therefore still trust in him, and he will enlighten thee more by his word and Spirit, he will enliven, strengthen, and establish thee more. Thy faith will daily rest more assuredly upon him, the joy of thy hope will increase, thy love will yet more abound. He will guide thee by his counsel in an even course, and will receive thee into glory.

Thus have I treated, as I was able, of the safety and happiness of living by faith upon the Son of God, and have described the common hinderances which stop its growth, and the victory over them, which the Lord gives his people. I have been forced to be very short, and could only throw out some hints upon this copious subject. May the good Lord pardon what is amiss, and bless abundantly what is according to his mind and will. If thou hast followed me, reader, in thy experience, and art indeed a happy believer living upon thy blessed Jesus, for his promised heaven; and for all things promised to thee in the way thither, think what a

debt thou owest him! how dear and precious should he be to thy heart! He has saved thee from all evil, he will bless thee with all good. As surely as thou hast the earnest, thou shalt have the purchased possession. Oh! what a Saviour is this! he has already bestowed upon thee the exceeding riches of the glory, which he will give thee! Thou wilt soon see him as he is, and then thou shalt be like him. No tongue can tell how great that glory will be, not all the tongues in heaven, after the number of the elect shall be perfected; no, not after they have enjoyed it for millions of ages: never, never will they be able to shew forth all his praise for making thee like himself. Surely, then, while thou art waiting for his glory, which shall be revealed, thou wilt be going on from faith to faith, that thy beloved Saviour may become more near to thee; and that thou mayest have more close and intimate communion with him. Every day's experience should bring thee to love his appearing more. Having tasted how gracious he is, thou shouldst be longing for the marriage-supper of the Lamb with fervent desire. And, being now a Father in Christ, and strong in faith, thou wilt be often looking up to him, and saying,

Make haste, my Beloved, and take me to thyself;—let me see thee face to face, and enjoy thee, thou dearest Jesus, whom my soul longeth after. It is good to live upon thee by faith, but to live with thee is best of all. I have found one day in thy courts conversing sweetly with thee, better than a thousand; but this has only whetted my appetite—the more communion I have with thee, I hunger and thirst still for more. My soul panteth for nearer, still nearer communion with thee. When shall I come to appear before the presence of God? O thou light of my life, thou joy of my heart, thou knowest how I wish for the end of my faith, when I shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but with open face behold the glory of my Lord. Thou hast so endeared thyself to me, thou precious Immanuel, by ten thousand thousand kindnesses, that I cannot be entirely satisfied, until I have the full vision and complete enjoyment of thyself. The day of our espousals has been a blessed time. O for the marriage of the Lamb, when I shall be presented as a chaste virgin to my heavenly Bridegroom! How can I but long earnestly for this full enjoyment of thy everlasting love? Come, Lord Jesus, let me see thee as thou art; come, and make me like unto thee. I do love thee, I am now happy in thy love, but not so as I hope to be. I am often interrupted here, and never love thee so much

as I desire: but these blessed spirits, standing now round thy throne, are perfected in love. Oh! that I was once admitted to see as they do, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! Is not that the voice of my Beloved, which I hear answering, 'Surely, I come quickly!' Amen, say I, even so come, Lord Jesus. Make haste, my Beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart, upon the mountains of spices.

Are not these, believer, the breathings of thy soul? Since the time for them is short, may they grow warmer and more affectionate every day! Thou wilt wait but a little while before thou shalt see the King in his perfect beauty, and thou shalt be a blessed partaker of his eternal glory. And if he make these few lines any means of bringing thee to see more of his beauty at present, to live more upon his fulness, and to be happier in him; I hope thou and I shall, through his grace, meet him soon, and give him to eternity the glory of this and of all his other mercies. To the Lord I commend thee, on whom thou hast believed. May he strengthen and establish thy faith daily, that it may grow exceedingly until he bring thee to the end of it, and admit thee into that innumerable company, who are ascribing blessing, and honour, and glory, and power to Him that was slain, and hath redeemed them unto God by his blood; to whom, with the Father, and the Eternal Spirit, three persons in one Jehovah, be equal and everlasting praise. *Amen.*

END OF THE LIFE OF FAITH.

PREFACE

TO THE

WALK OF FAITH.

EVER since the Life of Faith was published, I have been attending to the doctrines therein advanced, and bring them into experience. Their truth has appeared to me from the word of God, and has been confirmed by their being accompanied with the power of God. His divine influence attends his own doctrines to this day, and they have the promised effect upon the heart and life of the believer. They are mighty through God for all the purposes of salvation. What is said upon the subject in these treatises, is chiefly in this experimental way. My design is to bring the great and leading points of our religion into use and practice, and to shew how necessary the doctrines of grace are for the well-governing of the Christian walk. Every thing needful is promised, and by faith is received, which can make it even and regular, holy and happy.

The apostle Paul complained of professors, who walked not according to the gospel. There has been occasion for the same complaint ever since; but never more than at present. Many walk at this day, who make some profession of Christ, and yet never attain to any steadfastness, but are tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, and at last come to nothing.

Others, pretending to be better settled, attain to some form of godliness, but are without the life and power of it; they appear to have some notions and opinions about the way of righteousness; but not being taught them of God, nor ever brought under the mighty influence of them, their walk is therefore very uneven and irregular, and generally in the end brings great scandal upon the name and cause of Christ.

We have also many at this day, who set out in the ways of religion, but never felt the ruin of the fall, nor the plague of their own hearts: these are commonly very confident and presumptuous; they make a shining profession, and go on with great parade, until they come to be tried, and then in the time of temptation they fall away.

There are others, who are the real children of God, and yet do not walk as becometh their high rank and dignity. An even, holy, happy walk with their reconciled God and Father is their privilege, and there is grace sufficient promised in Jesus, and to be received by his Spirit, to enable them to live up to it, that they may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. Yea, the apostles call upon them and encourage them to be going on and advancing in the right way—'Furthermore then, we beseech you and exhort you, brethren, by the Lord Jesus Christ, that as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.' 1 Thess. iv. 1. How few follow this evangelical exhortation? How very few attain and preserve in their consciences the sense of God's being perfectly at peace with them? It ought to rule there always and by all means: but, for want of it, they afford continual occasion for a legal and unbelieving spirit to rob them of their peace, and thereby to distress them in their hearts. As guilt comes in, love goes out. What weakens the cause must also weaken the effect. Love, with its fruits, must decrease in

proportion as the believer withdraws his heart-dependence from God. Then he begins to walk uneven and uncomfortable, he grows cold and indifferent about spiritual things, he gets into darkness and discontent, he becomes quite unhappy in his frame, and unthankful in his affections: whatever was the cause of his falling into this decay, it began at the root. His faith was attacked, and gave way; as this yielded, the decay became general, and it was found true, 'If ye will walk contrary unto me, saith God, then will I also walk contrary unto you.'

Reader, if thou hast the faith of God's elect, thou knowest that these things are true. Thou findest it hard work to maintain peace with God: and if this be not maintained, if the foundation give way, the building will certainly totter. Look well then to the ground-work. Is all safe there? Dost thou see the infinite glory of the Saviour's work, when he made peace by the blood of the cross, and does this silence guilt in thy conscience? Canst thou at all times draw nigh in love to a reconciled God? Does not the sense of thy failings and remaining corruptions keep thee at a distance from him, and render thy work uncomfortable? especially when without are fightings, within are fears. If it be very difficult under such trials to preserve a sense of God's loving-kindness, yet it should be remembered, there is a gracious provision made for the establishing of the soul so safely in Jesus Christ, that the peace of God may rule in it always, and by all means. Is it not necessary then to inquire what this provision is? How it may be received? and how it may be made use of? For if by daily practice it may be experienced in its divine power, it will then have the same happy effect, which it had upon David: 'I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou hast set my heart at liberty.' May thine heart, reader, and mine, enjoy more of the liberty of the children of God, and then we shall not only go forward, but also run fast, and may nothing stop us from pressing toward the mark, till we win the prize of the high calling of Jesus Christ in God.

This has been my constant prayer during the writing of the following Treatise. It was the fruit of reading, and meditating, and praying over those Scriptures, which speak of the walk of faith. Such reflections as used to occur to myself I have put down; whether it was in searching mine own heart, or in begging the blessing of God upon the text then under consideration. This seemed to me an easy method, and very useful: because the doctrine would lead to practice, and frequent and heart-searching meditations would tend, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, to an increase of faith. There are some soliloquies addressed to my own soul, and some exercise of devotion in prayer and thanksgiving. I would have every believer to consider, whether it be not his privilege to join me in them, and to make my words his own. If he cannot follow me in his experience after the fifth chapter, I pray God to increase his faith, that this book and his experience may go hand in hand; and that he may attain to holy fellowship with God in all duties, and to rejoice in God at all times; yea, under the cross itself, and to go on conquering and to conquer, till the good fight of faith be over, and he finish his course with joy.

THE

WALK OF FAITH.

CHAP. I.

Whoever walks with God must be first acquainted with the way of peace.

It is the constant usage of Scripture to represent spiritual things by material, and to speak of the faculties and actions of the soul, by terms borrowed from those of the body. Walking is a bodily action, and consists in moving and going from one place to another; hence it is applied to the spiritual walk. The soul reconciled to God, and at peace with him, has an appointed way in which it is to walk, in order to enjoy the grace promised to them who are in Christ Jesus. This is enjoyed by faith, and therefore the Scriptures call the believer's going on in his walk with God from strength to strength, the walk of faith. 'We walk by faith, (says the apostle,) not by sight.'

When man fell from God, he lost his way, and had neither will nor power to return. The Old Testament church makes this confession: 'All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned *every one* to his own way,' Isa. liii. 6.

The apostle Peter reminds believers of this—'Ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the shepherd and bishop of your souls,' 1 Pet. ii. 25. To which agree the words of his brother Paul: 'There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God, they are *all* gone out of the way,' Rom. iii. 10—12. The whole human race, say the oracles of truth, is gone astray, *all* of them are gone out of the way; they have left the way of God, and turned every one to his own way; they are unable, like a poor lost sheep, the most unable of all creatures, to return, yea, they are unwilling also; for they walk not after the Spirit, but after the flesh—carnally minded and in their carnal mind enmity itself against God and his ways.

It pleased God in the exceeding riches of his grace to reveal to those wanderers the way of salvation. He made it known to them upon the fall: and believers, from that time forward, saw it plainly, and went on in it comfortably. Enoch, Noah,

Abraham, &c. are said to have walked with God, in the very same way afterward marked out by the written word; which was a directory to the Jews, shewing them how they should walk in the steps of the faith of their father Abraham. Age after age God raised up the prophets to bring his people into the king's highway, and to put them upon praying, that they might be kept in it. By the mouth of his servant David he gave them this promise—'Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way: the meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.' Encouraged by this warrant from the word of God, sinners, feeling their wants, were led to pray, 'Shew me thy ways, O Lord! teach me thy paths, lead me in thy truth, and teach me,' Psalm xxv. 4. It is written in the prophets, 'They shall all be taught of God; they shall all be taught of me from the least of them unto the greatest of them,' saith the Lord. If any of his children lack wisdom, and ask it of God, he giveth to all his liberally, and upbraideth not. He brings them by his word, and by his Holy Spirit, to the knowledge of themselves, and to the knowledge of the true God.

Divine teaching is necessary to make men acquainted with themselves. They know not their state, nor fear their danger, until the Holy Spirit, according to his office, proceed from the Father and the Son; then he convinces them of sin, of the exceeding sinfulness of it, of the guilt thereby incurred, and of the wrath deserved. He enlightens the understanding with a clear sight of those truths, and he fastens the convictions of them upon the conscience. Then they find that they had been blind and ignorant, rebels in their wills, and apostates in their hearts from God. He makes them feel the corruption of their nature, and the error of their ways, in which, if they had gone on, they must inevitably have perished: for they were without will, and without power, to return to God. When they were made to see it right, that they ought to return, and to repent, yet it was not their choice to come to him in the way of believing. They found they could not believe, unless it was given them from above. Faith is the gift of God, and cannot be received, but by the mighty operation of God. He must put forth his Divine power, or else the convinced sinner will remain utterly helpless and hopeless, shut up in unbelief.

Thus the Lord teaches all his children. He makes them acquainted with their fallen state, and sensible of their guilt, and of their misery. He brings them to the right knowledge of the corruption of every faculty of soul and body,

which are always inclined to evil, and incapable of doing any thing truly good. A corrupt tree can bring forth nothing but evil fruit. The judgment is enlightened to see this, and the conscience is awakened to feel this, and thereby the convinced sinner is made willing to be taught the way of salvation. The Holy Spirit fulfils his office, by teaching him the knowledge of God.

Our blessed Saviour declares, No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him; and this he does by the Holy Spirit of wisdom and revelation, who is therefore given to the children of God, that they may know him and believe in him, as their reconciled Father in Christ Jesus. This saving knowledge is hid from the worldly wise and prudent, but is revealed unto the unlearned, whom the Holy Spirit has made simple and teachable people. To them he reveals the things of God: he makes them acquainted with the

Nature of the godhead, which is one. There is one Jehovah, and there is none other. And also with the personality in the godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit: these three exist in one Jehovah. They took those names, not to describe their manner of existing, but their manner of acting; not what they are in themselves, but how they stand related to us in the economy of redemption: for the eternal Three entered into covenant before all worlds, and agreed to sustain certain covenant offices, and assume names or characters descriptive of their offices. Father is the title of that Divine person, who, out of his infinite grace, gave an innumerable company of sinners to his Son, upon condition that he would be manifested in the flesh, and would become their surety, to work out for them a righteousness in his life, and to make an atonement for them by his death, and then he would be his Father and their Father. A coequal and coeternal person accepted the condition, and covenant to be made man, and to live and die for the many sons, whom he was to bring to glory; therefore he took the name of Son, Son of God, Son of Man, &c. Another coequal and coeternal person covenanted to breathe life into them, to be to them the Spirit, or breath of life, that they might be regenerate from a death in trespasses and sins, and be made the children of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; therefore he is called, throughout the Scriptures, the Spirit, or the breath of life. He makes them acquainted with the cove-

nant, as he has promised: 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant,' Psalm xxv. 14. He will open to them the nature and certainty of all covenant engagements for the establishment and growth of their faith. The covenant was ordered in all things and sure; it was *ordered* by the counsel and purpose of the eternal Three concerning the heirs of promise, whose salvation was settled by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie—his counsel, his oath. His counsel, the result of his infinite wisdom, confirmed by that sacred oath which cannot possibly be broken. All his perfections stand engaged to see the sovereign decree, thus solemnly ratified, carried into execution; for what was *ordered* is *sure*—sure as the throne of Jehovah, unchangeable as his nature, durable as his being. Though it be but a man's covenant, yet when it has been signed and sealed according to law, none disannulleth or addeth thereto. None can disannul God's covenant, and he himself will not: 'My covenant will I not break (says he,) nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.' Psalm lxxxix. 34. 'I will not add thereunto, nor diminish from it; for I have ordered it in *all* things. I have not left one single thing out, not the least circumstance; I have settled the whole plan by mine unerring wisdom, and I will fulfil every tittle of it by mine almighty power. According to my will the course of nature and grace is infallibly directed, even the most minute events. Every hair is numbered. Not a sparrow falls but by my divine decree.'

How safely then may the heirs of promise depend upon a covenant God! and whenever they flee to Jesus for refuge, what strong consolation may they draw from hence, that their salvation is fixed by the immutable counsel and inviolable oath of the blessed Trinity!

The same divine Teacher, who enabled them to believe those truths for the farther establishment of their faith, led them to discover the *freeness* of all covenant mercies. They are promised as free gifts. They are bestowed to the praise of the glory of free grace. They are not conferred upon the worthy, but upon enemies, upon the ungodly, upon sinners as sinners. No conditions are required, no pre-requisites are expected. The motives which determine God to shew mercy to sinners, are not taken from any good in them, or foreseen to be in them. Not for works of righteousness which they have done, or can do; but according to his mercy he saveth them. He does all to the magnifying of the honours of his

own mercy. His covenant was so contrived, carried into execution by the life and death of Jesus applied by the Holy Spirit, that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. No flesh shall glory in his presence. Boasting is for ever excluded; because all is of grace. Wisdom to teach the sinner saving knowledge, righteousness to justify him, strength to keep him, comforts to bless him, heaven to receive him—these are the free gifts of covenant love: for by grace he is saved through faith, and that not of himself, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. Thus would the Lord hide pride from man, and would teach him practically such scripture as this: 'Not for your sakes do I thus, saith the Lord, be it known unto you, but for mine holy name's sake,' Ezek. xxxvi.

Closely connected with this divine lesson is the *fulness* of covenant mercies. Every thing needful for the salvation of the sinner is fully, as well as freely, provided by the exceeding riches of grace, and is treasured up by the Father's love in the fulness of the Son. To this the Spirit bears witness in the word of truth, and seals his witness upon the believer's heart. It pleased the Father that in the Word made flesh should *all* fulness dwell, and that out of his fulness his people should receive grace for grace. This is the infinite ocean. There is not a stream, not a drop of grace, to be had but from hence: Jesus Christ, as God-man, has it all in himself, and for the same end as the head has the senses in itself. He has it to communicate to his members, a fulness of light and life, of sense and understanding, of love and joy, yea, of every spiritual blessing. On him, as the head of the body, the church, every believing member is directed to live. On him must he depend at all times; and to him must he go for all things. If he seek pardon and peace, righteousness and holiness, a supply of his wants, strength for his warfare, comforts under his miseries, if he expect life in death, and life eternal, he must make continual use of the fulness of Jesus; for in him dwelleth *all* the fulness of the godhead bodily. It dwelleth in him as in an overflowing fountain. The Father's love to his adopted children, the experience of it by the grace of the Spirit, are entirely in and from the salvation of Jesus Christ. Out of his fulness comes every covenant mercy of the godhead, and in a rich abundant stream, always flowing with some blessing or other into the believer's soul. The enjoyment of it, on his part, may not be always alike comfortable, but is always alike sure on God's part. Nothing can stop it:

nothing can turn its course. Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. The river of the water of life proceeds out of the throne of God and the Lamb, and it will be running on till it come back into its own ocean. 'The water that I will give him,' says Jesus, speaking of the believer, 'shall be in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life, and bringing with it the fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

No man will see any reason to set out in the way to heaven, until he be made acquainted with those truths. His judgment must be enlightened with the knowledge of them. He will never think of changing his course until he be made sensible of his own sinful and helpless state; and when this is brought home to his conscience, and he has nothing in himself left to trust in, then he will be led to look abroad for help. The Spirit of God will teach him the doctrines of grace, the nature of the godhead, the persons in the godhead, the covenant of the Divine persons, by which every grace and blessing was freely and fully provided, given by the Father to the Son, in whose fulness they were all laid up for the use of his body the church, and communicated to every member of it, through the influence of the Holy Spirit. Thus he is taught, that all is of grace from first to last. Whatever good a sinner receives on earth, or enjoys in heaven, is so given, as to exclude all boasting, and to lay every proud and self-righteous principle in the dust, that grace alone may wear the crown, and may have all the glory.

Here, then, O my soul, is matter of close examination. Dost thou know thyself, thy state and condition, and hast thou fled from the wrath to come? Here the light of God's word shone into thy understanding, and made thee to see that thou art indeed set out in the way to heaven: how was this discovered to thee? Did the Holy Spirit ever convince thee of sin, and that thou hadst lost the image and forfeited the favour of God? Didst thou ever see thyself fallen in Adam, in him a child of wrath, a ruined miserable sinner? Hast thou felt how utterly unable thou art to atone for thy sins or to make thyself holy? and wast thou brought to after many legal trials and self-righteous efforts? At last forced to give up all hope in thyself, and to look to the Lord who made heaven and earth, from whom alone thy help could come.

And hast thou been taught the true knowledge of the unity of the godhead, and of the persons in it, Father, Son, and Spirit, the covenant of the ever-blessed Three, and the abso-

late security of all covenant mercies promised by the Father, and engaged to be given to the Son, as the head of his body, the church, who is now actually as God-man in possession of them, and by his Spirit he freely and fully bestows them upon his members; for they will never cease to be receiving out of his fulness grace for grace, until they receive out of the same fulness glory for glory.

O my soul, examine closely, and prove thyself by the standard of the Divine word. Search and try, what the conviction of thy lost estate has been. Was it deep and practical? Is it an abiding truth with thee, that there is no help or hope in thyself? And hast thou fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before thee in the Lord Jesus? Is thy knowledge of the godhead mere theory, or is it brought into practice? Dost thou enjoy the Father's love, through faith in the finished salvation of the Son, by the influence of the Holy Spirit? This is the saving knowledge of the godhead. And is this thine? Dost thou honour the Divine persons, by acknowledging their immutable counsel, and immutable oath, entered into for the security of the heirs of promise, that they might trust, and not be afraid? Dost thou see with any clearness the absolute safety of relying upon the promises of God, and dost thou expect to draw from hence comfort to thy conscience, and joy to thy heart?

If thou art indeed set out in the way to heaven, art thou settled in the knowledge of thy fallen state? Hast thou found thyself unable to do any thing but to hasten on thy ruin? And from the sight and sense of this, hast thou been led to see all undertaken for thee, and secured to thee for time and eternity, in the covenant of the ever-blessed Trinity. These truths lie at the very foundation of all comfortable walking with God. See that thou be well-grounded in them. The knowledge of thyself is to bring thee to God: the knowledge of God is to lead thee to walk with him. The one is to teach thee to renounce all trust in thyself: the other is to shew thee that thou mayest safely place the confidence of thy heart on thy reconciled Father, thy Saviour, and thy guide. Look up to him then, O my soul, and be often praying to him, and saying—

O Lord God, that which I see not teach thou me. Keep me an humble disciple in the school of Christ. Let me be daily learning there, what I am in myself, a fallen, sinful creature, justly deserving everlasting destruction from thy presence. O let me never lose sight of my want of a Saviour,

nor ever be without the sense of what he said—'Without me ye can be nothing.' Teach me this, thou eternal Spirit. Open thou mine understanding to understand the Scriptures. What thou hast revealed in them concerning the godhead, and concerning the counsels and works of the ever-blessed Trinity, that reveal to my soul. Thou hast declared, that no man can say Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost: O shine then into my dark mind, and lead me into the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Make me acquainted with his covenant undertakings, and his perfect fulfilling of them, that by resting on his finished salvation, I may find the Father's love in the Son, his Father my Father, and may be brought through thy blessed influence to have fellowship with the Father and the Son. O lead me into all truth, thou Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that I may know the things which belong to my peace, and may through thee be made wise unto salvation. Amen.

CHAP. II.

The believer is reconciled to God, and has the peace of God ruling in his conscience, and they two walk together; because they are now agreed.

It is written in the prophets, 'They shall be all taught of God'—every one of his children shall be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and what they have been taught in the understanding shall be made practical, that it may have its proper effect upon the conscience. And this is answered, when it comes under the authority and power of the word of God, and faithfully accuses or condemns according to that unerring rule.

Conscience supposes the knowledge of some rule, and it consists in comparing a man's state or actions with that rule, in order to discover whether they agree with it or not.

The rule is the Scripture, the whole revealed will of God, which is the unerring, and the only standard of right and wrong: for all scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, to teach the man of God what is truth, and to make him wise in it unto salvation. Fallen man has no means of discovering the will of God, but as it is revealed to him. He has no innate knowledge; he has no implanted principles; he is born as ignorant of God, and of the things of God, as a wild ass' colt. His understanding is darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the *ignorance* that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart.

And he has no means in his own power of attaining any Divine knowledge: for he cannot, by searching, find out God. The world by its wisdom never did find him out. The Hottentots know as much of him as the Greeks and Romans did: indeed, the natural man, let him be ever so wise, knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned.

The Scripture then is the only rule of right and wrong. Conscience has no direction but this rule. Neither ethics, nor metaphysics, no fancied light of dark nature, no lawless law of rebel nature, no human science, whether pretended to be implanted, or by the use of reason to be acquired, have any right to guide the conscience. These are blind leaders of the blind, they undertake what they are not only unfit, but what they have no warrant for. A parcel of felons in jail may think what they will of their state; they may take it upon them to form a mock court, and to try one another; they may acquit or condemn as they please: but the judge and jury will pay no regard to their foolish proceedings. There is a word which is to try us at the last day, and by that we should try ourselves at present. It was revealed for this purpose. And when the revealed truth is clearly understood, then conscience is acting aright; if it finds a true verdict for God, either accusing, or else excusing, according to the direction of his unerring word.

And this is the work of the Holy Spirit. He enlightened the judgment with the knowledge of the truth, in order to make it practical; which he effects by bringing the conscience to submit to the sovereignty of God in the law, and to submit to the righteousness of God in the gospel. Herein he displays the omnipotent power of his grace, according to the promise, John xvi. 8. He carries with demonstration the conviction of guilt, and the conviction of righteousness, to the conscience. By the former he gives the sinner a real heartfelt sense of his sin and misery, and he acknowledges himself a convict of the law justly deserving all its penalties, in time and eternity: by the latter he sets open a door of hope, shewing him the perfect righteousness of the God-man, wrought out for such guilty creatures as he is: he enables him to plead it before the throne, and to trust in it for his acceptance; by which means he finds relief in his conscience, and comfort in his heart. Being justified by faith, he has peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

What the Holy Spirit teaches, has life as well as light in it.

He accompanies his doctrine with the power of God. W
he has revealed concerning the state of mankind under
fall, he applies with divine evidence to the conscience. U
his influence, the sinner reads those scriptures, and feels
truth of them, 'as by one man sin entered into the world,
death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all
sinned: through the offence of one, judgment came upo
men to condemnation; for it is written, there is none ri
eous, no not one; there is none that understandeth; the
none that seeketh after God: they are all gone out of the
they are together unprofitable; there is none that doeth g
no not one. Now we know, that what things soever the
saith, it commands them who are under the law, that e
mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become g
before God.' His mouth is stopped: he has no plea to m
no excuse left. What the law saith he subscribes to.
law brings him in guilty before God, and in his conscienc
bears his testimony to the law. He acknowledges it t
holy, just, and good, even in its penalties, which he dese
to suffer. Formerly he tried in his own strength, and
great pains to escape them, but now he gives over all t
self-righteous attempts. He found that he laboured in va
atone for his sins, or to make himself holy. He groans, b
burdened, under the ruins of the fall. His ignorance, rebel
apostacy, his corruption in every faculty of soul and b
render him unable to take one step in his return to
He owns it, and confesses, that without Christ he ca
nothing.

O my soul, consider whether God has taught thee
knowledge of thyself. It is absolutely necessary to reco
thee to him and to his ways. Thou wilt never heartily a
to walk with him by faith, so long as thou hast any thin
thine own to trust in, or to draw comfort from. Exa
then; art thou sensible of thy fall, and dost thou feel the
effects of it? Dost thou know what it is to be alienated
the life of God? What! dost thou find to this day the o
sition of thy sinful nature to the holy law, the flesh lustin
thee against the Spirit? Has God thus convinced thee of
If he has, then in thy conscience thou submittest to wha
law says of thy state. Thy mouth is stopped, and thou
guilty before God. Thou hast nothing of thine own to
in arrest of judgment. This is an enlightened conscie
so far as it speaks for God, and is guided by his une
word. O pray to the Lord, the Spirit, and beg of hi

guide thee into all truth, that he may bring thy conscience to submit to the righteousness of Jesus, and to be a faithful witness for him.

This is his proper work in the soul, and what he undertook in the everlasting covenant. 'When he is come (says Christ) he shall convince the world of righteousness: he shall testify of me, that I am made of God righteousness to believers; and he shall glorify me as Jehovah their righteousness: thus he shall teach them my righteousness, with which the Father is satisfied; and he shall, through faith, apply it effectually to their consciences, and they shall also be satisfied with it.' Being justified by faith, they shall have peace with God, through their Lord Jesus Christ.

Righteousness is a perfect conformity to the law; if it be tried by the balance of the sanctuary it is full weight; if by the standard, it is full measure; if judgment be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet, it is quite upright. There is no defect in it of any kind. This is the righteousness of the law—it must be perfect and continual, failing in no one point: for the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. And it is an adjudged case, that there is none righteous, no not one. It is left upon record, that *all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.

When the Holy Spirit has convinced a sinner of his being in this unrighteous state, then it becomes an important inquiry. How can the Judge of all the earth ever look upon and treat a sinner, as if he was a righteous person? To which the gospel answers directly, 'God hath made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God *in* him.' This was agreed upon in the covenant of the eternal Three. The Father undertook to maintain the honour and dignity of his law and justice. His coequal Son undertook for his people to come in their nature, and to stand in their place and stead; to act for them, and to suffer for them. As their surety, he made himself answerable for their debt of obedience, and for their debt of suffering. Accordingly, when the great Lawfulfiller cometh into the world, he saith, 'Lo, *I come to do thy will*, O God.' He did it in his infinitely holy life, in which he magnified the precepts of the law, and made them everlastingly honourable. He suffered it in his infinitely holy passion, bearing the sins and sorrows of his people, their curse and wrath in his body and soul upon the tree, until the immense debt being paid, he cried out in the triumph of a conquering,

though a dying, Jesus—'*It is finished:*' for through death he conquered death, and him that had the power of death; that is, the devil: he finished the transgression, and made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

This is the great leading truth of the gospel, in which the peace of conscience is principally concerned. The justly-offended God is here revealed under the character of a reconciled father. He gave his Son to be a covenant of the people; who was to fulfil all covenant engagements for them, and he has fulfilled them all. The end of his living and dying for them is answered. He has finished the transgression, and has made peace by the blood of the cross. He has brought in everlasting righteousness by his Divine obedience, and the Lord is well pleased with *him* for his righteousness sake; yea, he is well pleased also with his body, the church. He looks upon all the members as he looks upon the Head. He accepts them in the Beloved. He beholds them in him with perfect delight, and rests in his love. He is his father, and their father. He is related to his whole family in heaven and earth in the closest bonds of fatherly affection, and he makes his love known to them, and sheds it abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. He would have all his children to address him under his dear name, *Our Father, which art in heaven;* and to expect from his fatherly love all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

When this comfortable doctrine is received into the conscience, it silences guilt, and produces peace with God. The gospel comes with full authority to establish it in the conscience: for it is therein revealed and proposed to our belief, under the character of a Divine *record*, made authentic and properly enrolled in the court of heaven. The witnesses are the eternal Three. Their record is in the nature of a covenant, confirmed by their joint counsel, and ratified by their joint oath—the two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie. He graciously vouchsafed to give the heirs of promise this perfect security for their salvation, that after they had fled to Jesus for refuge, there might be an end of all strife in their consciences, and they might have strong consolation. Accordingly we read, 'There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are *one.*' A record among men, is an authentic testimony in writing, entered by authority in one of the *king's courts, in* order to preserve the proceedings had upon

any suit. This record contains the final determination of the judges in that cause, and is their memorial of it, and therefore imports in itself such uncontrollable evidence, as to admit of no proof to the contrary. The matter of the record is never allowed to be tried by a jury, but is of such credit as not to be questioned in any instance. This is the nature of a record in law. And if we receive the witness of men, certainly the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God, which he hath witnessed of his Son, namely—'He hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.' To which the Spirit beareth witness; because the Spirit is truth. He has revealed the covenant of life and peace, which was between the Father and the Son: he has entered it upon record, and every word of the record may be pleaded: for it is allowed to be good and valid in the court of heaven. As a powerful advocate, he pleads the perfect fulfilling of all righteousness in the life and death of the God-man; and the Father's perfect acceptance of what he did and suffered, as the full redemption-price for all his people, and he carries his cause in the court of conscience. The awakened sinner is convinced, that the work of Jesus is a finished salvation, and that the Divine record is a sufficient warrant for him to believe in it. Accordingly he gives it credit, and is enabled to plead it against guilt and fear: upon which he finds peace with God. Trusting to the blood of sprinkling for pardon, and to the righteousness of Jesus for acceptance; he then sees God reconciled to him, and that reconciles him to God, and by the Spirit of adoption he cries, 'Abba, Father.'

But, perhaps, it may be said, 'I believe this, but I do not find peace in my conscience.' Nay, but you do not believe it; if you did, it would certainly bring present relief; for guilt comes from the broken law, and from the apprehension of punishment deserved; but the law has been restored to its dignity, and made infinitely honourable by the righteousness of Jesus; how can you believe this, and yet be under guilt? The punishment was laid upon Jesus, and he suffered all that was due to his people, as their atoning sacrifice; how can you believe this, and yet fear that justice will punish you? A debtor would not fear o be arrested, if his surety had paid the sum, and got him a full discharge. A felon, with the king's pardon in his pocket, would dishonour it greatly, if he was to live in continual dread and terror of suffering for his crime. Examine carefully, and pray for the right understanding of your case; and, *depend* upon it, you will find, that either

you do not believe the matter of fact, or the record concerning it.

The matter of fact is the method provided for quieting the guilty conscience—a provision of exceeding rich grace, and of everlasting efficacy. The Father gave the Son to be the surety for his people, and to live and to die for them, and in their stead. The Son has finished the work which the Father gave him to do, and is become the author of their eternal salvation.

The record of this fact is in the Scripture. Father, Son, and Spirit, the three witnesses in heaven, have by covenant and oath attested, that there is life for every one who believeth in Jesus. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

Now, consider, of what do you doubt? Has Jesus made full atonement for sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness? Has the Father demonstrated, again and again, his perfect delight in his person, and his infinite satisfaction in his work? Certainly you cannot question this doctrine, if you believe the Scripture to be a divine revelation. Do you doubt then of God's free promise, or his faithfulness to fulfil it? What! can his word be broken? Can his promise fail? His word and promise ratified in the immutable covenant, and sealed with the immutable oath of the eternal Three? This is your warrant to believe. And do you question the veracity of it? 'He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar.' O what a dreadful sin to give the lie to the Holy Trinity! The Father says, Whosoever cometh; the Son says, All that come unto me, shall be saved: the Spirit says, Come whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely, and be saved. Are not these faithful sayings worthy of all credit? especially as they are delivered with Divine authority, under the great seal of Heaven. If doubts still remain, pray against them, and meditate upon the unreasonableness as well as the wickedness of them, and continue to hear and to read the word of God (for faith cometh, and growth too, by hearing,) that you may be enabled to put honour upon it by venturing your soul upon the Divine faithfulness, to make it good to you.

Perhaps you may believe the recor l, which God hath given of his Son, but you cannot do it with steadfastness: you can, at times, stay your mind upon God with sweet peace, but you are not able to maintain it; yea, you lose it when you want it most. How, in this case, shall the believer keep the peace of *God ruling* always in his conscience?

It is to be maintained in the same way by which it was first received. It came by believing, and is thereby strengthened. By the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, peace was made between God and man; by the sprinkling of his blood, peace is made between man and God. When this is applied to the conscience by the Holy Spirit, and received by faith, there is a continual preservative against guilt—'For the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.' Here is the witness of God: and it is always the same. This believed will always bring the same cleansing virtue, and keep the conscience purged from dead works. If at any time guilt defile it, then unbelief has entered, and has been denying, either that the blood of Christ does cleanse from all sin, or that the Divine testimony concerning it does deserve credit. Guilt cannot easily enter into the conscience but by one of these two ways. Examine, and see which it is. Do you doubt of the virtue of Christ's blood, or of the truth of God's record concerning it?

You reply, I dare not question either of them; yet, nevertheless I cannot, with any settled comfort, maintain peace with God. But it is your privilege to maintain it, confirmed to you by the royal charter of grace, and ratified in it by many express promises. Jesus has made peace by the blood of his cross; and if you believe what the God of truth says of it, peace should rule in your heart always: for all things are well ordered for you, and sure in the everlasting covenant. On the part of God, all is unalterably fixed and settled. What is it, then, which unsettles you? Is it something you find in yourself? Is it from indwelling sin, remaining corruption, a body of sin and death, or from the weakness of your faith, and of your other graces? What! have you forgotten, that from all these the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth? Is it from a suspicion, that your peace is not right, because it ebbs and flows? This should humble, but not discourage you: because there is a gracious provision made to remove your suspicion. God has taken the charge of you and of your peace: he keeps both by his mighty power, as it is written, The peace of God which surpasseth all understanding, shall keep with a safeguard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. You are as safe in the hand of God, at the lowest ebb, as at the highest spring-tide of sensible comfort: because your safeguard is almighty, and he is equally concerned about your peace, whether you feel it or not. Your sense of it may vary, but he varies not. There is in him no variableness, nor shadow of turning. How should the belief of *this stay* your mind upon your God, and keep

guilt out of the conscience, even when you are walking in darkness and have no light!

O, my soul! meditate upon those precious truths. Give thyself wholly to them. Consider how deeply they enter into the very being of thy peace. Unless they be understood, thou canst not know the way of peace; and unless they be received by faith, thy conscience will not be purged from guilt and unbelief: and, while these defile it, thou canst not look upon God as reconciled, or delight thyself in him or his ways. Can two walk together except they be agreed? But when they are agreed, and of one mind, then walking with God becomes pleasant, and all his paths are peace.

Search, then, and examine thyself, O my soul, and that not lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with God, but closely and thoroughly by the light of the Divine word, and under the teaching of the Divine Spirit. Dost thou understand what is revealed concerning the way of peace—what was covenanted in the council of the eternal Three—and what has been done in consequence of it? Jesus Christ is the great peace-maker. He has made peace through the blood of his cross. The Father sent him, gave him to be a covenant of the people, to fulfil for them all righteousness, and to be their atoning sacrifice. The Father hath seen the work which he gave him to do, and has accepted it; is perfectly satisfied with it, and therefore is infinitely delighted with him, and with all his. He would now be known by the high style and title of the *God of Peace*. Fury is not in him to those whom he sees in the Beloved. He is a Father, fully, for ever reconciled to all his children in Christ Jesus. He loves them, as he loves him, with every kind feeling of the most tender parent; and he will bring every one of them to partake with their glorified Head of the blessings of his everlasting love.

If thine understanding be enlightened with this knowledge of God, is it effectual in thy conscience? Canst thou plead it there? This is the principal thing. Hast thou a good conscience, freed from guilt and condemnation, by believing the record which God hath given of his Son? He is well pleased with him for his righteousness' sake. His soul delighted in the sweet-smelling savour of his Son's sacrifice; because he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore the Father hath highly exalted him. This is the witness of God. Dost thou yield to it, and give it full credit? What! canst thou set to thy seal that God *is true, and that* what satisfied him has perfectly satisfied thee,

and therefore the peace of God rules in thy conscience always, and by all means?

Remember, this is thy privilege. Thou art called to the enjoyment of it. The evidence is as full as could be desired, for the ending of all strife in thy conscience. The greatest honour thou canst put upon the Divine witnesses, is so to end it, as to suffer no appeal to be made from their decree. Thy conscience should join issue; it should say the same that God does; it should plead thy discharge from guilt under the broad seal of Heaven; and should stop the mouth of unbelief with those words, written in golden letters in the royal charter of grace—'There is *no* condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus—they are freely forgiven *all* trespasses; they are justified from all things. Thy sins and iniquities,' says God himself, 'will I remember *no more*.' These are the immutable words of truth. They cannot be broken. O my soul, put honour upon them. Believe them without doubt or wavering. Why dost thou draw back thy confidence? Trust, and not be afraid. Thou mayest safely venture to believe all that the Lord hath spoken. He will make it good; and the more thou believest, the more will be made good. More faith will bring thee in a richer revenue of peace. The Lord increase thy faith. May it entirely influence thy conscience, that it may agree with God: neither questioning the infinite value of the righteousness and atonement of Immanuel, nor yet the faithfulness of his promise, under which thou claimest them—*Whosoever will* may take them freely.

Let thy faith be ever so well established, yet thou wilt meet with something every day to try it; but remember, the foundation on which thou standest cannot fail, and none, nothing shall remove thee from it. The Lord brought thee to build upon this foundation. He hath begun the good work, and he will not leave his work unfinished. The top-stone shall certainly be brought forth with shouting—*grace, grace:* for his love is like himself. His purposes, his word, his works, change not. What if thou feel many things wrong in thyself, thou art sometimes low in spirits; thou canst not be pleased with thy corruption, and thou art not pleased with thy duties; thy graces are weak, thy love not as it should be, thy best services unprofitable; yet these very things, rightly understood and improved by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, will be the means of establishing thy conscience in the peace of God. They will lead thee every day to a greater dependence upon sovereign grace; for they will leave thee nothing to trust in.

but the righteousness and the atonement of Immanuel: nothing to keep thee, but his faithfulness to his word and work; and nothing to bless thee, but his free covenant mercy. Thus they will work together for thy good. Trials will settle thee. Enemies will confirm thee in peace. Troubles will bring thee nearer to God. Amidst all discouragements thou wilt have this promise to stay thy soul upon—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' His friendship is fixed. It springs from the purpose and love of his own breast, and therefore was and is always unchangeably the same in him: whom he loveth, he loveth unto the end.

Well, then, O my soul, thou hast examined thyself. How is it with thee? Dost thou know the way of peace? Art thou at peace with God, being justified by faith? Canst thou plead this peace, and maintain it in thy conscience? Is it a good conscience—does it witness for God? Is it a pure conscience, cleansed from guilt and condemnation? Is it satisfied, that the Father is perfectly reconciled through the life and death of his Son? And is it satisfied with the divine record, giving thee a free grant of the benefits of his life and death, and putting thee into possession by believing? Art thou of one heart and of one mind in this matter with the Father, and now, being at peace with him, agreed to walk in his way? If indeed he has been thus gracious unto thee, bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise him for the exceeding riches of his love. What a mercy is it that he has brought thee into the way of peace! O go on: fear not. Set out daily with a holy humble boldness to walk with thy God: and for the guiding of thy feet in his way, and that thy steps may not decline from it, be diligent in hearing and reading the word of God. Study it; pray over it; mind what encouragement it gives thee—'Having therefore, brethren, boldness, to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by that new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh, and having an high-priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water,' Heb. x. 19, 20, &c. What perfect peace is here proclaimed to the children of God! Sin had separated them from him, but there is access through Jesus. He is the way to the Father. He is a new way, in opposition to the old way of works, which upon the fall was shut for ever. He *is* a living way; all that are alive to God, live by the faith *of the Son of* God. He is a consecrated way; every thing

needful for their holy walk being provided in him. And they are required to walk in this way with boldness; trusting to the blood of Jesus, and depending on the intercession of the high-priest over the house of God, they have access with confidence to the holiest. It is their undoubted privilege to draw near with a true heart, not like a double-minded man, wavering and unstable; but with full assurance of faith, entirely satisfied, that God in Christ has nothing in his breast but love towards them; therefore they should believe in him, and serve him without fear, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, maintaining peace with God through the continual application of the blood of Jesus, and having their bodies washed with pure water, body and soul being cleansed from the guilt and filth of sin, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

O may this be my happy experience. May I ever have grace to draw near to my reconciled Father with a good conscience. Yea, Lord, this is my heart's desire. I would walk with thee day by day in perfect peace. O deny me not the request of my lips. Glory be to thy free love, that through Jesus I am suffered to have access into thy presence, and am commanded to come with boldness into the holiest of all. Lo, I come before thee, holy Father, to plead the blood-shedding and the righteousness of thy dear Son; and I hope my plea will be admitted, through the intercession of the high-priest of the house of God. O look, thou God of peace, upon the face of thy Beloved. See me in him. I desire to be found in him. And for his sake let the faithful witness for thy love in Jesus abide with me, that in hearing and reading thy word in prayer and meditation, he may increase my faith and love to thee.

O God, the Holy Ghost, I beseech thee to make practical upon my heart what thou hast revealed in Scripture of the Father's love. Deliver me from guilt and condemnation by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. Apply it effectually; apply it continually. Help me to believe with more comfort in my conscience, and with more steadfastness in my walk, that his blood cleanseth from all sin. O blessed Spirit, carry on thy work in my soul. Lead me from faith to faith, that I may at all times have freedom to enter within the vail to a reconciled God and Father, and may be able to maintain peace with him, against doubts and fears, against corruptions and enemies. O teach me to draw near to him with a true heart, *steadfastly persuaded* of his love, and in full assurance

of faith. This is thy gracious office: O fulfil it in me, that my heart may be sprinkled from an evil conscience, and my body washed with pure water. Let me find grace sufficient for me, for Jesus' sake: to whom with thee, O Father, and the eternal Spirit, three persons in one Jehovah, be equal honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAP. III.

The believer in his heart cleaves to God, and walks with him in love.

This depends entirely upon a good conscience. There can be no love of God, unless there be first peace with God. No convinced sinner can love him, until he believes him to be reconciled. While guilt remains in the conscience, enmity will keep its place in the heart: for so long as he looks upon his sins unpardoned, and God the just avenger of them, he must consider him as a jealous God, and a consuming fire. In this view there is every thing that can increase his guilty fears. And while these defile the conscience, instead of walking with God, he would run away from him, and, like the first offenders, he would foolishly try to hide himself from the presence of God.

But when the Holy Spirit has discovered the way of peace, and has enabled the sinner to find peace, being pardoned and justified through faith in Christ Jesus, then he looks upon God in another light. He can view him, according as he has proclaimed himself—the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. Under this endearing character, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is revealed in Scripture. Thus would he be considered in the covenant of grace—related in the nearest bond of affection to all his children. He is their Father, the Father of mercies, freely loving, freely forgiving, freely accepting them in the Beloved. The Holy Spirit convinces them of it, and sheds the Father's love to them abroad in their hearts; the sense of which sweetly inclines them to love him again. Love begets love. God has put on the tender bowels of an ever-loving parent, and he gives them the affection of dutiful children. They love him, because he first loved them. Then it is the delight of their souls to cultivate *and improve* this love on their part, and it becomes their

heaven upon earth to walk with their God in the ways wherein he has appointed to meet them, to love them, and to bless them.

The main point then in the Christian walk is to know how to maintain peace in the conscience; because this is a powerful motive upon which the believer first sets out, and it is the great spring which keeps him going on. While his conscience continues pure and undefiled, and the peace of God rules in it, all is well. He does not stop, he does not halt in the way. But when guilt enters, unbelief certainly follows close after it, and then there is a fresh controversy in the court of conscience. Many doubts arise, and afford matter for strife and debate. The sense of peace is not only disturbed, but is also for a time destroyed by such suspicions as these: Am I freely pardoned? Is God fully reconciled to me? Is he still my loving Father? I fear not. I have done so and so. He is certainly displeased with me, and therefore I dare not approach him, as I used to do, with love and confidence. This is an evil conscience. It is not purged from dead works; because guilt is still in it, and this keeps the soul at a distance from God. It begets a coldness and a shyness to him, and by shutting out the comfortable sense of his love, makes way for fear of wrath. Then the motives to walk with God lose their influence, and an evil heart of unbelief tempts the man to depart from the living God.

Look well then, O my soul, to this leading truth, which has such universal influence over the Christian walk. Attend to the peace of thy conscience. See it be true peace, and mind it be well settled. Learn to maintain it upon gospel motives. The heart follows the determination of conscience; and cleaves to the Lord, or departs from him, according as the conscience excuses or accuses. It is therefore absolutely necessary for our peace, that we should know how God has shewn himself reconciled in Christ Jesus. This character of him in the Scriptures should be studied. Whoever has been enabled to call him Abba, Father, should implore the assistance of the Holy Spirit for an increase of faith, and should make use of all appointed means for his growth in the knowledge of the love of the heavenly Father. The apostle is upon this subject in Rom. v. a chapter abounding with powerful arguments to establish the peace of God in the conscience; in order that the love of God may rule in the heart. He gives us this account of the privileges of a justified man. He has peace with God through Jesus—by whom he has free access

to God—is in a state of grace—stands in it by the power of God—has reason to rejoice (come what will) in hope of the glory to be revealed—and whatever he meets with in the way to glory should increase the rejoicing of his hope, and confirm his heart in the love of God to him. Observe how divinely the apostle speaks: 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God; and, not only so, but we rejoice in tribulations also, knowing well that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us.'

What privileges! how many, how free, how blessed, are here declared to be the portion of the justified man, which he is to enjoy in his reconciled God! Each of them tending to establish peace in his conscience, and love in his heart, that he may delight himself in God and in his ways. The first and chief blessing in experience, which draws after it all the rest, is the Spirit—

The Holy Ghost is given unto him, to be a witness for Jesus, and to shed abroad the Father's love through him. He comes as the Spirit of life to quicken the soul, which had been dead in trespasses and sins, and to bring it to the knowledge of salvation, which he does, secondly, by the gift of faith.

'Being justified by faith.' He enables the sinner to believe in the finished work of the God-man, and to trust to the free grant of it in the word of God; whereby he sees himself fully justified; through the atonement of Jesus freed from sin and guilt; through the righteousness of Jesus entitled to life and glory; and therefore, thirdly, he has

Peace with God through Jesus Christ his Lord: he sees God is at peace with him—perfectly and continually reconciled. The peace is everlasting which was made through the blood of the everlasting covenant. The belief of this quiets and satisfies the sinner's conscience; which being purged by the blood, and justified by the righteousness, of Jesus Christ his Lord, is at peace, is freed from guilty fears, and is reconciled to God, yea, to the justice of God, who can now be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. To what high honour is he then called! He is admitted into friendship with God, and has,

Fourthly, Access by faith into his grace, wherein he stands —*access to a* mercy-seat, to which he is invited to come freely,

as a beloved child to an affectionate parent. Boldness and access with confidence are required and commanded. 'Let us come boldly to the throne of grace; having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,' let us by faith make much use of that new and living way, which he hath opened for us. O what a mercy is it thus to have access to a gracious Father! How much is the mercy increased by his settling his children in it! *We stand* in it, says the apostle, denoting the being fixed in a state of perfect acceptance, conferred by sovereign grace, brought into it by unchangeable love, and kept in it by the power of a faithful God, how strengthening to faith, how encouraging to hope! for,

Fifthly, We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Faith relies upon the truth of what God hath promised, and hope waits for the enjoyment of the good in the promise, but more especially for the glory which is to be revealed. This hope of glory is full of rejoicing: because every thing which hope looks at and draws its joy from, depends on the truth and faithfulness of a covenant God; there can be no failing on his part, and therefore on the believer's there can be no disappointment. On this ground hope casts its anchor, both sure and steadfast, and finds all safe during the storms of life, yea, has many a sweet foretaste of the promised glory brought into the soul by these very storms: for,

Sixthly, We rejoice in tribulations also. These are so far from taking away the joy of the justified man, that they tend greatly to increase it, and to make it more holy, as well as more happy. Tribulations produce a plentiful harvest of blessings; they bring forth

Patience, giving occasion to exercise the graces of the Spirit, to find the truth and the power of them, and thereby working submission under the cross to the will of God. 'It is good for me,' says David, 'that I have been afflicted;' his troubles brought him to God.—'Before I was afflicted, I went astray.' His troubles kept him near to God, dependent on the Divine strength to bear them with patience, and for a happy issue out of them. Whereby he learnt

Experience, which follows suffering and patience. Tribulations teach us what we are as sinners, and what God is to his reconciled children. They make us sensible of our weakness, and of our being strong only in the Lord—of our misery, and of his comforts—of what we deserve, and of what he saves us from: they bring us to live out of ourselves, upon the sure *mercies of a covenant* God: whereby our hope in

him being tried, and by trials confirmed, we discover his love to us in suffering; and by daily experience become quite satisfied, that our

Hope is in the grace of the Holy Spirit; for it answers the Scripture-character; it rejoices in tribulation. It has good reason so to do. It experiences God's faithfulness. Every thing promised being made good to us in time, we thereby grow up in the full assurance of hope, that we shall not fail of receiving the promised glory. And this

'Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us.' He is given to satisfy our hearts of the love of God to us, and to lead us to study the nature and the perfections of his love. Behold! what manner of love, what a free, full, sovereign, and everlasting love the Father hath bestowed upon us. It is actually bestowed and enjoyed by the power of the Holy Ghost. He shews us how the Father loved us, even when we were without strength; yea, herein God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were sinners and enemies, he gave his Son to live and die for us; much more then being now justified, we shall be saved from wrath, and brought to glory, through him. How does this commend and set off the love of God! It is the first cause of all the graces here mentioned, and bestows them upon the most unworthy. Faith, justification by faith, access to God, standing in a justified state, rejoicing in hope of glory, and rejoicing in the way to it, even in tribulations, because they exercise and improve patience, and put our graces to such trials, as convince us that they are the true graces of the Holy Spirit, and that we shall never be ashamed of our hope in God. In this golden chain of experience, love is the uppermost link. It was the first, and draws after it all the rest. The free love of the Father gave his Son for us, and with him gave us all things: the same love has now given his Spirit to us, and he has enabled us to know and to believe, that we are justified, have access to a reconciled God, stand accepted before him, &c. and that he is our loving God and Father in Jesus. The sense of this warms the heart, and sweetly and powerfully influences the affections to delight in, and to walk in love with, such an exceedingly gracious and merciful God.

In this delightful portion of Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us, how he brings sinners to know that God loves *them. It is by* believing in the righteousness and atonement

of the Son of God. Hence spring peace and love—peace with God in the conscience, and love to God in the heart. There is an inseparable connexion between those two graces: the one cannot exist without the other. Whoever knows the God of peace, will find that God is love: for being justified by faith, he will thereby see that God is at peace with him, and himself in a state of free acceptance before him; in which he shall stand and be kept safe, until he receives the promised glory: the hope of which will be confirmed by his daily experience of God's faithfulness, making all things, even tribulations, work together for his good in the way to glory: thus will the Holy Spirit satisfy him of the love of God to his soul. And the persuasion of his love begets love. It softens the hard heart; it warms the cold heart; it works kindly upon all the affections; and, by setting before them every possible good to be enjoyed in their reconciled God, it mightily disposes them to seek their supreme happiness in walking humbly and closely with him.

Attend then, O my soul, to this Scripture. Meditate upon the experience of which it treats. Pray for it; pray for more of it. And, above all, observe the great truth here taught thee by the Holy Ghost, namely, that thou canst not have any true love of God but what arises from the sense of his being at peace with thee in Jesus. O beware of false teachers; for there is great reason. Many talk big of their loving God for his own inherent loveliness. A fundamental mistake. Mystics, quakers, natural religion men, dreaming metaphysicians, and the motly tribe of moralists and deists, pretend to love an absolute God, without viewing him in the covenant of grace, or as he has revealed himself in the incarnation of his Son. There has been no love of this kind in any heart upon the earth for near six thousand years. Adam in paradise might love him thus: but when driven out of paradise for sin, he could love him so no more. The promised seed of the woman, the Word made flesh, became then the object of his faith, and the only ground of his love. The Scripture has clearly determined this: 'We love him, because he first loved us—And in this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.' When the Holy Ghost has taught this love of God to sinners, and by believing has manifested it to their hearts: then they love him upon Christian principles; and sinners cannot love him upon any other. They love him for that *infinite* mercy which led him to send his

only-begotten Son into the world to finish the salvation of his people: they love him for sending the Holy Ghost to enable them to see the everlasting sufficiency of this salvation, and to believe the record of God concerning it: whereby they come to experience how much the Father loved them. This is heaven begun. The Father's love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, is the foretaste of glory. Whoever enjoys it, has found what is more to be desired than gold; yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. O, it is indeed heaven upon earth. To preserve it, to improve it, is become the only study of the happy believer. The panting of his soul is after more of this love. The prayer of his faith is, O thou eternal Spirit, help me so to walk with my most loving Father, as that I may maintain peace with him in my conscience, and a growing love to him in my heart, until thou bring me to the enjoyment of everlasting peace and love.

The prayer of a righteous man prevaileth much, being offered with energy. By the love of the Spirit it is answered. He not only preserves, but also increases his own graces. He leads the believer to fresh discoveries of the Father's love, and puts him into possession of the exceeding rich treasures of it. He helps him to draw very strong arguments for the comfort of his heart from the perfect freshness of Divine love. Thus he reasons—

Although I am beset with temptations, and assaulted with corruptions, and in a world of troubles, yet I need not fear, but God will bring me safe through all; for I know he loves me. It is plain he does. I could never have loved him, unless he had first freely loved me. My love is only the reflection of his. I have been convinced of sin, but it was not from myself: the conviction was of God. I have been convinced of righteousness, and I put my whole trust in the righteousness of Jesus. He is the only ground of my hope. I now rest my soul upon the sure foundation, which he hath laid: and this faith is not of myself; it is the gift of God. I ascribe it to his sovereign grace, that I have been enabled to look upon the Father as reconciled to me, pardoning me through the blood-shedding of his Son, accounting me righteous through the obedience of his Son, and in him accepting, loving, and blessing me. How could I experience these things but by the power of the Holy Ghost? And for what did I deserve to experience them? The reason must be found in the riches of his own free grace.—Did the Father foresee any thing good in

me, for which he chose me in his Son? Was it for any worthiness of mine, that the Son vouchsafed to take flesh, and to live and die for me? Was it for any foreseen works, faithfulness, or diligence in means, that the Holy Ghost called me to know, to believe, and to enjoy the Father's love through the Son's salvation? O no. Away with such thoughts. I dare claim nothing for mine own but sin and shame. Not unto me, Lord, not unto me, but unto thee be all the glory. It was the good pleasure of thine own will, which chose me before the foundation of the world, and accepted me in the Beloved; and now I know that thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. I experience the happy fruit and effect of them. I am brought to believe in thee, and to love my God and Father, which I am satisfied I could never have done, if thy free love had not first purposed to save me, and now carried thy purposes into execution. To the praise of the glory of thy distinguishing grace, I am in possession of the things which accompany salvation. O give me more grace, that I may daily make a better use of them, and may return thee better praise for thy free gifts of free grace.

It is free, and it is also *covenant* love. This is another of its divine properties. God commendeth his love towards the heirs of promise, by giving them full security for its unchangeableness; and this view the Holy Spirit opens to them for the support of their faith in times of trial. When they are walking in darkness and have no light, troubled on every side, without are fightings, within are fears, when in great heaviness through failings in duty, through risings of corruption, or through manifold temptations, then he discovers to them the treasures of covenant love, and enables them to draw rich consolation from that heavenly storehouse. An heir of promise under his teaching is often supported in this way—It is true, I am in trouble, but not forsaken. What if every thing I have and am in myself makes against me, yet God is on my side, a covenant God: for I believe the eternal Three entered into covenant before all worlds, and with manifold wisdom ordered all things relating to the heirs of promise. For their sakes, and to end all strife in their consciences about the certainty of their salvation, it pleased the blessed Trinity to enter into covenant, and to confirm their covenant by oath, thus giving them two immutable things to trust in, in which it is impossible for God to lie. O, how strengthening to faith is this view of the unchangeableness of covenant love! If it be but a man's covenant, being properly signed and sealed, no one disannulleth

or addeth thereto. And who shall disannul or add to the covenant of the Trinity? The creature cannot. God will not. His purpose of bringing many sons to glory is unalterably fixed in his own mind, and in order to make it a sure ground for their faith, he confirmed his immutable covenant by his immutable oath. On this security I rest my soul. A covenant God has enabled me to trust in his covenant engagements. Hence I see every thing relating to my salvation absolutely certain in the counsel and covenant of God: and I look upon my faith to be one of the effects of my being in the covenant. And faith as a covenant gift is an immutable gift. What a blessing is it, that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance! It has been given me on the behalf of Christ to believe. And is not this from covenant love? What else could bring me to trust in covenant faithfulness? Therefore by believing I have immutable things to depend upon for the certainty of my salvation. Upon them would I stay my soul, as well as I may, and fix my heart upon them. O that I could bring more glory to my covenant God, by trusting him with unshaken confidence! His love to me demands it at my hands. His love contrived the plan of salvation. Love provided every thing needful to carry it into execution. The evidence which he has given of this, was from the overflowings of love. His word of promise, ratified by covenant, confirmed by oath, the oath of the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, made to satisfy the heirs of promise of the Divine will concerning them—O what miracles of love are these! And all to assure them, that the heart of Jehovah is invariably towards them for good! Yes, Lord, this is the great love wherewith thou lovest me. And this is the evidence of love. Thou hast brought me to believe it, and to put some honour upon it. I desire to trust to thy covenant engagements without wavering. Establish, strengthen, settle my faith. Increase it from day to day, that I may grow in the knowledge and experience of that love which passeth knowledge. For,

It is a free covenant, and also an *everlasting* love. This is another of its most glorious properties. His love knows neither beginning nor end. It is without variableness, or shadow of turning. The heart of God is always one and the same towards his chosen people; for he loveth them freely: the motives to it were all in and from his own breast. The covenant was distinguishing love, secured to the heirs of promise by the most solemn engagements. And this crowns all. His love is of the same date with the covenant—not only be

fore all worlds, but also from eternity. Therefore it is frequently called in Scripture an everlasting covenant, and covenant love is said to be according to the eternal purpose, which he had purchased in Christ Jesus our Lord: whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Here is a never-failing source of comfort to a believing heart. Meditate, O my soul, upon it. Consider, what God hath done for thee, and give him the glory of his precious love. Has he not called thee by his Spirit, working in thee in due season? Hast thou not obeyed the call? Dost thou not depend upon the finished work of God thy Saviour? Art thou not justified freely by faith in him? Art thou not seeking daily to mortify the works of the flesh, and thy earthly members, and that thy mind may be drawn up to high and heavenly things? Certainly these are good proofs of the purposes of the Father's love towards thee: because these are the happy effects of his purposes, now taking place in thy soul. O how greatly should this consideration establish and confirm thy faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed by Christ, and thereby kindle thy love towards God. He has, indeed, drawn thee by the sweet attraction of his Spirit unto himself, and he has explained to thee the motive for his so doing—'Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.' His love, discovered to thee in time, is the fruit of his love before time: for the one is the effect of the other. If love had not been always in his heart towards thee, thy heart could never have been drawn in love to him. But he has drawn it; and thou art seeking to have it drawn more closely to him. Is it not thy daily wish? O for more love to my gracious Father—what a love has he shewn to me—what a free, covenant, everlasting love! And yet, alas! what poor returns do I make him! Holy Spirit of love, raise and exalt my affections, and let the consideration of the wonderful love of my heavenly Father to me increase mine to him, and let mine abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all sensible experience.

The Holy Spirit, who is the great teacher and manifester of the Father's love, has revealed these properties of it in Scripture, for the establishment of the faith of the children of God. He would have them believe assuredly that God is their Fa-

ther, not in name only, but in deed and in truth; that he has the bowels of the tenderest parent, and that he freely, fully, everlastingly loves them in his dear Son. As he loves him, so he loves them. He embraces the head and the members with the same affection. And because they can hardly believe this in times of trial and trouble, the Holy Spirit would satisfy their hearts of it, by discovering to them the unchangeableness of their Father's love, as it has been manifested in the Divine covenant, and confirmed with the Divine oath. In both which, the witness of the Father to his children is given in this manner—I have freely loved you, I have engaged to love you, and I will ever be mindful of my covenant-engagements—as I live, saith the Lord, I will love you unto the end—yea, I will bless you with all spiritual and eternal blessings in Christ Jesus—what he, your elder brother, is, now in glory, that will my love make you—the mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on you.

These are faithful sayings and worthy of all acceptation. O evil heart of unbelief, what pretence hast thou to reason against the truth of them? O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt of receiving the goodness of them? Your Father is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should alter his purpose. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Yes, the purpose of his heart, spoken with his mouth, shall be made good with his arm: all his perfections stand engaged to establish his faithful word, and therefore it is a safe ground to build and to rest upon. Trusting to it, the believer may boldly claim the promised blessings of his Father's love; and with a hope, that will never make him ashamed, he may expect a growing enjoyment of its free covenant and eternal blessings.

Well, then, O my soul, thou hast considered the subject. What are thy sentiments of the love of the Father? Are they such as the Scripture teaches? Take heed of error. A little mistake here will have dreadful effects upon thy walk. Dost thou believe, that thou, coming to the Father, through faith in the life and death of his co-equal Son, art pardoned and justified before him, and that this thy coming to the Father, through the Son, is from the grace of the Spirit? Therefore the Three that bear record in heaven do witness to thy being an object of covenant love. Does this witness keep *thy conscience* quiet, and thy heart happy? Canst thou plead

it against guilt and fear, and maintain the influence of it in dark and trying times? the love of thy heavenly Father is immutable: dost thou experience it to be so? It is everlasting: canst thou depend upon it as such? It has provided all blessings for thee in Jesus: art thou receiving them out of his fulness, grace for grace? It is proposed to thy faith in John xvii. and in Eph. iii. as a never-failing spring of consolation. Read and try, whether thou art practically acquainted with what is there written. Examine the character of the Father's love; and be assured what is not agreeable to it, is not the teaching of the Holy Spirit. His office in thy soul is to witness to what he has revealed in the Scripture, to explain it to thine understanding, to make it the ground of thy faith, and the enjoyment of thy heart. Dost thou then understand, and believe, and enjoy, the Father's love, according to what the Holy Spirit has testified of it?

Perhaps thou art clear in thine understanding, but through the weakness of thy faith hast but little enjoyment of the love of God. Why is thy faith weak? Search into the cause (depend upon it, God is not the cause;) and, having discovered it, inquire into the remedy. There is provision made in the covenant for all the infirmities of thy faith: for it was well ordered in all things and sure, and thy faith was well ordered and sure—infallible securities were provided in the covenant to make it sure. That thou shouldst have it, that thou shouldst keep it, and keep it too unto the end, the blessed Trinity have engaged, by their immutable counsel, and their immutable oath. Therefore, thou art now kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. The power of God, which is thy keeper, has given thee faith, and keeps thy faith, that it fail not. Thou and it are well kept. A covenant God has the charge of both. Almighty love watches over thee, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Till these fail, thy faith cannot fail. O what powerful motives are these to induce thee to believe without wavering! Consider them carefully. And may the Lord render them the means of strengthening thy faith, and of thereby enabling thee to cleave more closely in love to thy heavenly Father.

It may be, thou art hindered from living by unshaken faith, because thou hast so little love to God—he ought to have all thy heart and soul, and mind and strength, but it grieves thee to observe what a small part he has of them. This view is always humbling. Our love, at best, is not what it ought to be. It is not *constant*: it ebbs and flows. It is not perfect.

the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit. It is not what God deserves as payment for love received: who will compute the full value of his love to one redeemed sinner? On earth it surpasseth knowledge: in heaven it surpasseth all returns of praise. The highest love of glorified saints is only acknowledgment, put not payment. They are perfectly humble, and therefore willing that God should have all the glory of their salvation. To him they ascribe it. The same mind in thee would refine thy love, and make it something like theirs. When thou art considering thy love to God, and ashamed at the sight of it, then look at his. Look especially at his, when thine is little. Believing views of his will increase thine: thine has nothing else to excite it, or to nourish it. Thou art not called upon to warm thyself with the sparks of thy love to God, but with the pure constant flame of his love to thee. He is to keep up thine. His is the first cause, and thine is but the effect. The experience of this will heal all the infirmities of thine. When thy love is little, unsettled, cold, and dull, then study the Divine properties of his: these rightly understood will increase, settle, warm, and actuate thine affections. By believing meditation, thou wilt find a pardon provided for thy little love; the sense of it will comfort thy conscience. Thy heart will grow hot within thee; while thou art musing the fire will kindle. It will break out. Thou wilt speak with thy tongue praise and thanksgiving to thy loving God and Father.

Thou art willing, then, O my soul, and ready to set out to follow thy God. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, thou hast chosen him for thy portion, and, in a constant dependence upon his grace, thou hast taken his way for thy daily walk. How great is the love, wherewith he loveth thee! Survey it. Measure, if thou canst, the dimensions of it in thine own particular case. The more thou art acquainted with it, the readier wilt thou be to give him all the glory of it, and to make such acknowledgments as these:

I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that, being justified by faith, I have found peace and free access to a reconciled God. We are agreed, and now I desire to walk with him. He is my Father in Jesus, and I know he has bowels of the tenderest affection for me. I ought not, it would be base in me to question it, since he has shed his love abroad in my heart by *the Holy Ghost*; who has made me of one mind, of one heart, *and of one* way with himself. His way is become mine: for

he has reconciled me to it, by causing me to see that he has chosen me freely, as an object of his electing love, that he gave his Son to finish salvation work for me, and that he has now given his Spirit to me, who has called me, and given me ears to hear, who has bestowed on me faith and hope, and has enabled me to look upon these as fruits of the Father's covenant grace and everlasting favour. O what exceeding riches of love are these! If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. What am I, that I should be accepted in the Beloved? His Father mine. He sees me, loves me, yea, blesses me in him. My title is clear to all spiritual blessings, because God, being my God in Jesus, all things are mine. He will make them all work together for my good. He that withheld not his own Son, but gave him for me, how shall he not with him freely give me all things? Having his free grant of them in the word of promise, and trusting to his faithfulness, I have set out to walk with my Divine Friend and Father, hoping to enjoy his loving presence all the way to heaven. I would not aim at getting any new title to his love, but to have new enjoyment. Every day I am seeking for more knowledge, and for more experience of his abundant love to me in his beloved Son. And, for this end, I would walk close with him in his way—not to buy his love, it is inestimable—not to merit it, free grace and merit cannot stand together—not that I may deserve it for my walk, but may freely receive it of him in my walk—not that he may give it me for walking with him, but that in walking with him I may enjoy what he has already given me. His love is a free gift. I would by faith enjoy it in time, as I hope by sense to enjoy it in eternity. Whatever blessing, strength, victory, or comfort, I stand in need of, I look to the fulness which he has laid up in Jesus, and from thence I receive it. I read my title to it, and I take possession of it, for nothing done in me or by me, now or at any other time, but only in and for the free grace of his Father and my Father. While I can live thus by simple faith, I find I am enabled to go on well. The sense of his free, covenant, everlasting love, keeps my heart happy, and makes walking with him my delight. O that he may enable me to press forward, that I may hold my confidence, and the rejoicing of hope, steadfast unto the end! And why need I doubt of it, since he has me in his keeping? His love has bound itself to me by covenant engagements, which are my full security for what he has declared—'I will never leave *thee nor* forsake thee.'

These desires, I am persuaded, are from thee, O Father of mercies. I could never have sought my happiness in thy love, unless thou hadst first loved me. O grant me then the desires of my heart. What thy good Spirit has put me upon seeking, let me by his grace find continually. He has manifested to me thy perfect reconciliation to thy people, through the life and death of Jesus. It has been given me on his behalf to believe this. I have therefore taken thee for my God and my portion, and I would so walk with thee as to obtain a growing knowledge and experience of thy love. For this cause I bow my knees unto thee, holy Father. O hear and answer the prayer of faith. Give me grace to walk with thee in love, all the way to glory. I ask it in the name of Jesus: for thou art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. One Father, one family, one love. Thou receivest all thy children, whether in heaven or in earth, into the same near relation, and embracest them with the same dear affection in thy beloved Son. O what a mercy is this! Blessed, for ever blessed, be thy fatherly love, which chose me to be of thy family, and which has brought me to know that I am a child of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. I thank thee for giving me the desire to live as such, and to walk worthy of my high calling. O grant me then, according to the riches of thy glory (out of thine infinite treasury of grace, and to the praise of the glory of thy grace,) to be strengthened with might by thy Spirit in the inner man. He is the promise of the Father. All thy children have their new birth, and every faculty of the new man from him, and by the working of his mighty power they are kept, as well as renewed, day by day: for without him they can do nothing. Of this he has thoroughly convinced me. I know I cannot call thee Father, nor believe in thee, nor love thee, but by thy Spirit. O my God, strengthen me effectually by his grace in the inner man, for every purpose of spiritual life. Whatever he has engaged to do in thy children, let him do it in me, that through his presence and power Christ may dwell in my heart by faith. O let him continually discover to me mine interest in Christ, and open to me the exceeding riches of thy love in him. Holy Father, let thy good Spirit abide with me, that I may know for certain Christ is one with me, and I am one with him, and may thereby be able to maintain constant fellowship with him—he dwelling in me, and I in him. O may I thus live continually by the faith of the Son of God, depending

always for acceptance with thee upon his atonement and his righteousness, and so may find the happy fruit of his prayer to thee—'O righteous Father, I have declared to my disciples thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou lovest me, may be in them, and I in them.' Thou didst hear, thou hast answered times out of number, the request of thy beloved Son. Lord God, answer it to me. Let me rejoice in thy love, and find it to be the same to me as to him. Let thy good Spirit root me and ground me in the knowledge of thy love to me in Jesus. O grant me to be deeply rooted in the experience of it, that my faith, working by love, may bring forth much fruit to thy glory, and I may become so grounded in love, as to stand unshaken, like a house built upon a rock, against every attack made upon my love to thee. O my God and Father, my heart is naked and open to thee. Thou knowest the secrets of it. Thou seest how fervently I pray for the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. My prayer comes from a feeling sense of my want of him, and from a dependence on thy promise to give the Spirit to them that ask him. Lord, I ask. Grant me to be strengthened by him, with every needful gift and grace in the inner man. Send him to manifest plainer and plainer my union with Jesus, in order to my keeping up communion with him; that, having him dwelling in my heart by faith, I may be so established in the experience of thy love to me in him, as to be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and heighth of thy love. All the saints comprehend it: but the saints below less than they above. And some of them below comprehend more than others. I know but little: O my God, increase my knowledge of thy love in Jesus. Whereunto I have attained, establish me; and keep me pressing forward for clearer discoveries of it. Help me to survey it, so far as faith is able, in its most glorious dimensions, and to praise thee for mine experience of its rich mercies. Holy Father, teach me still more by thy Spirit of the boundless freeness, and of the endless fulness, of thy love—let me know thy love in Christ, which passeth knowledge. Although I cannot know it as it is, my limited understanding being incapable of measuring the infinity of thy love, yet for this very reason let me be daily studying to know more of it—growing up into Christ Jesus by faith—abounding in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost—and increasing in the love of God. Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, let me thus partake of the fulness of grace below, grace for grace,

till I partake of the fulness of glory above—that I may be filled with all the fulness which is of God, with which thou hast promised to fill thy children in earth and heaven. O magnify thy love towards me, according to its greatness, and not according to my deserts, or to my prayers. I know thou canst do exceeding abundantly above all that I can ask or think, according to the power that worketh effectually in me. Thy power engaged to act for me is the support of my faith, and mine encouragement in my prayer. It is an infinite and almighty power, which has graciously begun, and has hitherto prosperously carried on, the good work in my soul. To it all things are possible. Lord forbid I should doubt of thy granting the petitions, which I have been offering up unto thee in thy Son's name. That which thou hast promised, thou art able also to perform. O my God and Father, set thy power to work more effectually in me. Let the Spirit of might enlarge my thoughts of, and my faith in, thy precious love. Let me experience daily, how much more thou art able to do, than I have yet obtained; to give, than I have yet asked; to increase, than I have yet thought. And whatever increase thou givest, may it draw out mine affections in greater love to thee, and to thy ways, and so be the means of bringing more glory to thee. For thy love in Jesus, the whole family in heaven and earth is ascribing honour and praise. Accept my thanks, holy Father, together with theirs. To thee be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

CHAP. IV.

The believer goes on successfully, while he walks by faith in a constant dependence upon his reconciled God and loving Father.

THE leading principle upon which he sets out is this: God is my God and Father. He is perfectly reconciled unto me, and my conscience is at peace with him, through faith in his beloved Son. He loves me in him. He has manifested it plainly to me, and now my heart would cleave to him, as my most tender parent. I would rest in my love to him, as he rests in his love to me. It is entirely through the grace of the eternal Spirit, that I have been enabled thus to believe in the *finished work of* Jesus, and to experience the Father's love in

him. By which means I have been satisfied of the love of the ever-blessed Trinity to my soul. Father, Son, and Spirit, have covenanted to make me an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ: from my belief and experience of these truths, I have been enabled to choose God for my portion. His will is become mine. His appointed way is my course; and now I desire so to walk with him, as to maintain in my conscience the peace of God, and in my heart the love of God. I do not expect any new title to these inestimable graces. My claim is good and valid under Christ. I would not disparage it, by supposing that my close walk with God was to make any atonement for my sins, or to be the least part of my justifying righteousness. I have these already, and perfectly too in Jesus. The enjoyment of them is the thing I want. I am seeking for more of that peace with, and love to, the Father, to which I am entitled in his Son. His fulness, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, is mine. A free grant of it has passed in the court of heaven, has been revealed in the record of truth, and I, by believing, have accepted the grant. I am in possession of its privileges, and am enjoying its blessings. On the fulness of Jesus I live this day. Out of it I hope to be receiving every grace, which I shall want for my safe and happy walk with his Father and my Father. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for what thou knowest and hast experienced of his abundant grace: which has enabled thee thus to walk with thy reconciled God and loving Father. This day thou art called upon to maintain peace with him in thy conscience, and love to him in thy heart; peace like his, flowing from the sense of his being perfectly reconciled to thee—love like his, the happy fruit of his unchangeable love to thee. Whatever thou meetest with in thy work or warfare, ought not to lessen, but ought to exercise and to improve those graces. Never forget that he is thy God—the God of peace. He stands related to thee in the dearest and most indissoluble bond of love. He is thy father in Jesus. Keep the sense of this always fresh upon thy mind, and thy steps will be ordered aright. Nothing will be able to stop thee in the way to heaven, or to seduce thee out of it; but every thing will bring thee forward. Whilst thou canst maintain peace and love, thou wilt go on prosperously against guilt and self-righteousness, against the wiles and assaults of thy spiritual foes, against the world which lieth in wickedness, and against every inward and outward trial. The Lord being on thy side, all these shall work together under him for thy good, and they shall

be the means of making thee walk safely in the way, and of bringing thee happily to the end of it. The apostle has given us the whole plan in few words—'We *walk*,' says he, '*by faith*, and not by sight.' We direct our Christian course by believing, and not by seeing. Faith is to us the evidence of things not seen, and the ground of our hoping to enjoy them. We believe, upon the authority of God's word, that they are what he describes them to be; for faith, as a grace of the Spirit, consists in giving credit to what God says. If it be a truth proposed to the understanding, faith relies upon the infallible word. If it be a promise, faith depends upon the arm of God to make it good. And whatever he has promised, faith (when it is as it should be) does not stagger at difficulties, but rests fully persuaded, that what God hath promised, he is able also to perform. Faith looks at the word spoken, and overlooks seeming impossibilities: *Thus saith the Lord*—that is enough for faith—full of satisfying evidence: for it knows that to speak and to do are the same thing with an unchangeable God.

How many errors in judgment, and consequent mistakes in practice, prevail at this day, chiefly arising from confounding faith with its fruits; and from not distinguishing between the word of God believed, and what will follow upon believing it aright. Thus some make assurance to be of the essence of faith, others make appropriation, and many make it consist in an impression upon the mind, that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me. These are fruits: what faith should produce, but not what it is. These are effects of faith working, and not definitions of the nature of faith. A believer should be exhorted to make his calling and election sure: for it is his privilege. He ought to give all diligence to attain assurance, to appropriate Christ with all his blessings to himself, and to be clearly persuaded that Christ loved him, and gave himself for him. These are the blessed fruits of believing. May God give his people more of them. But then the tree must be before the fruits, and the fruits grow upon the tree. Faith is first, and faith derives its being from believing the word of God, and all its fruits are continued acts of believing. And when you hear of believing, do you not always think of something spoken? You cannot separate these two in your mind. Something has been said and proposed to you before your belief can be called for. If nothing has been said, belief has *no exercise*. Faith and the word of God, therefore, are related, *as the effect* and the cause; because faith cometh by hearing,

and hearing by the word of God. What God hath spoken in his word demands belief from all that hear it. When faith cometh by hearing it, then we assent to the truth of what God hath said, and we rely upon his faithfulness to make good what he has promised. Assurance is this faith grown to its full stature: but we are not born six feet high. Appropriation is a very comfortable acting of faith, when a man is persuaded of his interest in covenant mercies; and, from what he then feels, can say, Christ loved me, and gave himself for me: but he has not this comfort in times of heaviness; he may be walking in darkness, and having no light; yea, in the hidings of the Lord's countenance, and yet even then he may trust simply to what God hath spoken; which is true faith, and more exalted faith, than that which draws its evidence from its appropriating acts and its present experience. The more a man trusts to sense, the less he lives by faith: for sensible feelings are not faith. Impressions are not believing. I see the sun; I hear a sound; I feel an object: faith hath no place in these instances. Its essence is believing and trusting what God hath spoken. If his word be believed, and, by believing, the conscience finds peace, and the heart joy: these are joy and peace *in* believing. They come from believing; are its effects; and no more enter into the essence of faith than comfortable feelings do into the essence of a man. He is as truly a man, when miserable, as he is when comfortable.

These mistakes should be carefully guarded against, because they are chiefly pernicious to the children of God; who are kept by them from going up into assurance, into appropriation, and into the sensible experience of God's love to them in Christ Jesus. They are puzzled—they are misled, by being told that they have no faith, if they have no assurance, &c. They examine themselves, but cannot find any such faith. This discourages them. They are tempted to think they have no true faith, because they have not what certain persons talk of. But if they would adhere strictly to the word of God, and would take their ideas from it, they would see how simple and plain a thing believing is, and would soon be satisfied that they were true believers. Which conviction would have many blessed effects, especially these—it would put them on seeking for an increase of faith, and upon expecting the proper fruits of faith. What nourishes faith, ripens them: for they cannot be produced so long as persons are doubtful whether they have any faith at all. They would see how desirable it is to *believe without* doubt or wavering, what honour it

puts upon God's word, what comfort it brings to them. And they would be waiting in the appointed means for grace to maintain, for grace to improve their faith, that they may be going on from faith to faith. While this was their end and aim, faith in act and exercise, maintained and improved, would bring in daily growing evidence of their being indeed partakers of the faith of God's elect. Living by faith, walking by faith, would demonstrate to them their spiritual life and walk, as plainly as natural life and walk can be demonstrated by any outward actions.

Here is great need, O my soul, to read the Scripture, and to pray for the Spirit of wisdom. Read, pray much, lest thou shouldst err concerning the faith. Every error will be a stumbling-block in the way of thy holy walk, and make thee tired of it, or seduce thee out of it. Let it be one of thy daily petitions, Lord, save me from all mistakes concerning the faith of the gospel; and let the word of God, by which faith cometh and groweth, be thy daily study. This is thy present business. Now set out trusting to what God hath spoken, and relying on what he hath promised. On this principle proceed, as it is laid down by the apostle, Col. ii. 6. 'As ye have therefore received Jesus Christ the Lord, so walk ye in him.' He is expressing his joy at his beholding their order, and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ, and he would teach them how to maintain their faith throughout their Christian course. How did you receive Christ at first? Was it not by believing? Receiving Christ and believing in him are, in John i. 12, supposed to mean the same thing. And in John xvii. 20, 21. our Lord says—That they who believe in him through the word, are one with him. Christ then is received by faith, and by the same faith, by the belief of the same word of God, we walk in him, so as to be rooted and grounded and established in the faith. Our walk is in him, not any thing distant from him; but is the effect of union with him. By him we live, in him we walk,—rooted in him we grow, as a branch in the vine,—built up in him, we are fixed as a building on a sure foundation, and thereby we become established and strengthened in the faith. Every step we take is by faith, by the same faith wherewith Christ was received. He must be received always, as he was received once. There is no change of object, and there must be no change of faith, but the same continued trust on his word, and the same dependence on his promised strength. We never set out to walk with a reconciled God, till we are one with Christ by faith, and know our union with

him, and our walk is in consequence of this. If we go on at all, it is by communion with him. We can receive only out of his fulness, grace for grace, to make us willing and able to go forward. Our fellowship with him is in every part and in every moment of our walk, and this is as necessary as our fellowship with the air and elements of this world is to every thing that concerns our natural walk. Our wisdom to guide our steps, our progress in the way, our courage and strength, our warfare and victory, every grace and every blessing is received by faith, and is the effect of our communion with Jehovah Jesus. We trust in his word, we rely on his arm, we wait on his faithfulness, and so go forward; for he makes good what he had promised to give us in our walk, which confirms the peace of God, establishes our hearts in the love of God, increases our faith, and thereby makes our daily walk more comfortable to us, and more glorious to him.

But if faith consist in believing and trusting the word of God, it may be inquired, how shall we know the difference between true and false, between dead and living faith? It may be known from the cause. The fruit of the Spirit is faith. He produces it. It is the gift bestowed by his operation, continued by his power, increased by his blessing, and carried on to the end, by his never leaving nor forsaking his own work. And he makes it known to be his. He gives eyes to see it, and hearts to acknowledge it. Therefore the apostle says of them who have received the Spirit of God, that they *know* the things which are freely given to them of God; by faith they both know the reality and also taste the sweetness of those free gifts of free grace.

It may be known from the effects. Dead faith brings forth nothing. Living faith is fruitful. It produces a hearty trust in the truth of what God hath spoken, and a quiet reliance on the faithfulness of what God hath promised. It gives him credit for the finished salvation of his Son, and puts honour upon his record concerning it; whereby peace is received into the conscience, and love into the heart: upon which there follows a settled dependence upon this reconciled God and loving Father, for the fulfilling of every promise, and this is improved by daily experience. He that trusteth in the Lord is never confounded. God is faithful. His promises cannot fail. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him. The Lord God will be a sun and a shield unto him: the Lord will give him grace and glory.

As for the hypocrites, it is not so with them. The Holy

Spirit was not the author of their faith. It was a fancy of their own, formed in their heads, without any warrant from God. There was no life in it, and no living effects from it. There was the form, and nothing more. They made a profession, but never came to any enjoyment. They had no vital union, and therefore they could not have any real communion with Christ. They could not, as the apostle expresses it, walk *in* him, and therefore in the hour of temptation they fell away, and came to nothing. Take heed, then, O my soul, of mistakes. Examine carefully of what sort thy faith is. Bring it to the standard of Scripture; and see what went before believing—see whether thou dost now from thy heart believe what God hath spoken—wait for the effects. Dost thou so trust his word, as to take him for thy God and thy portion? Art thou walking with him? And art thou depending on him to bestow the promised graces and blessings on thee in thy walk? If this be thine experience, thou art set out well; go on. Remember where every thing relating to thy walk is to be had. The Father's love has laid it up all in the Son's fulness, and it is the office of the Holy Spirit to teach thee how to receive out of it grace for grace. He teaches by his word. With this in thine hand, and his light in thine understanding, read and study what he has promised thee for thy safe, happy, and holy walk. Take no step without the direction of his word, and expect at every step that he will make good to thee what he has promised. Thou wilt very soon find the necessity of this dependence upon him: for ere thou hast well begun thy walk, thou wilt be called upon to exercise thy faith, and to put it to trial. Thou wilt meet with many things in thee averse to this holy walk, and many more to distress thee in it. The body of sin, the old man, the flesh, with all its affections and lusts, are still in thee. It is of their nature to be lusting, and to be always putting forth some filthy motions, in order to draw thee to walk after the flesh, and not of the Spirit. The tempter helps them all he can: he knows how to improve them to his own interest, and if, from what is passing within thee, there be a sight and sense of sin, then if he can get thee to look at it in his view, he will act upon thy legal and self-righteous tempers, and will inject such vile insinuations as these against the Lord, and against his Christ:—

How is it that I am yet the subject of sin? It is still in me. It cleaves to me, as the flesh to my bones, and it mixes so with my duties, that I cannot perform them without it. I *sometimes* fear I am nothing but sin. When I attempt to

walk with God, ere I set out, something evil arises within me, and stops me: some proud unbelieving thought, some sensual affection, some worldly disposition, some corruption or other, is ever at hand to hinder my course. What then must I think of myself? I scarce know what: things I see do not grow better: I have been long hoping for it; but I find there still dwelleth no good thing in me: so that I am almost ready to question the truth of my grace, and it is with great difficulty I can keep up any peace in my conscience. When the believer is attacked in this manner (and who is not at some time or other,) how is he to defend himself? Will his skilfulness in the word of righteousness, and his faith in the word of reconciliation, keep him safe in the hour of temptation? Yes. By the grace of the Holy Spirit, the lessons before learnt will be enforced, and brought into use. This is the time to maintain faith in the atonement, and in the righteousness of the God-man. Now it is to be tried in the fire; and it is put to the trial, that it may come out of it, like gold, proved to be sterling metal, and refined from its dross—better in every respect for having gone through the fire. The trial of faith is far more precious than that of gold which perisheth. It is therefore put into the furnace, that the believer may know the truth of it, and may experience the blessings of it. Faith conflicting with unbelief is a good fight—sometimes sharp; but always profitable. The flesh may be weak and ready to yield, faith may be hard put to it, but victory is certain. During the battle the warrior is invincible in the whole armour of God. He takes to him the shield of faith, and holds it up against the fiery darts of Satan. He draws out the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and with it he defeats Satan. He consults or remembers a scripture suitable to his present case, and this being sent home by the Holy Spirit puts an end to the engagement, and restores and settles sweet peace in the conscience. How often has he applied the following passage, which the Lord speaks concerning his true Israelites, Jer. xxxii. 38—41. 'They *shall* be my people, and I *will* be their God, and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me *for ever*, for the good of them, and of their children after them, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear into their hearts that they shall not depart from me; yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good.'

What strong consolation is there in this scripture! Every sentence has an argument in it, tending to establish peace

with God, and to maintain it in the midst of war. How quieting and satisfying to the troubled conscience is his covenant purpose! 'They *shall* be my people, and I *will* be their God.' They shall, because I will. My will shall make them willing. And in the day of my power, when my purpose takes place, I will give them one heart, turned to myself, and one way, to walk with me by faith as obedient children with their loving Father. This will I do for them that they may fear me *for ever*, that the fear of offending me may rule always and by all means in their hearts.

O what promises are these! what can weak faith require farther to silence its doubts? How great is the goodness of God to his children, who, knowing their frame, and whereof they are made, for the good of them, and of their children after them, has laid such a foundation for their faith, that they may build on it and not be afraid, yea, standing on it, that they may fight the good fight of faith, assured of victory.

I will make, says their God, an everlasting covenant for them, a covenant ordered in all things, and sure by the counsel and oath of the blessed Trinity, the two immutable things, in which it is impossible God should lie: the mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from them, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on them. My covenant was made for them, and shall be made good to them. As I live, saith the Lord, I will not turn away from them to do them good. I will never change my purpose, nor alter the word that is gone out of my mouth. I mean nothing but good to them: my heart is fixed upon it; and I will not leave the event to them: they shall not have the management of my purposes, nor have any power to defeat them. My will to do them good shall not depend on their will, or on their faithfulness, or on any thing in themselves. I have taken all their concerns into mine own hands, and I will conduct them all to the praise of the glory of mine own grace. I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me—they *shall* not depart from me. They are not the cause of their not departing, but I am. I have taken it upon myself. I will give them grace to walk close with me, and to fear me always. I have covenanted for all, the means as well as the end, and I will keep them by my almighty power, till they receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their *souls*. 'Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good.' This

confirms all the rest: his purpose of doing them good, his executing it, his continuing it, his increasing it through time and through eternity, is a matter of rejoicing to the Lord God: he delights in it. It always was, and always will be, the joy of his heart, his crown and glory. He will not, he cannot, be deprived of his joy. Consider this, thou poor distressed soul, who art in heaviness through manifold temptations, and ready to faint through the weakness of thy faith: take courage; thy salvation is safe: thy Father, who is in heaven, rejoices in it: he will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing; and his joy too shall be thine. As sure as God is in Zion, thou shalt return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon thy head; thou shalt obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever.

O what a discovery is here of the ever-loving heart of our heavenly Father! What more could he promise in order to put an end to all strife in the consciences of his afflicted children! He has engaged in a covenant of peace to do good, nothing but good, to them. He has undertaken the whole of the covenant—what was to be done in them, as well as for them—to work out, to apply, and to secure their salvation. It is his unchangeable purpose, not to depart from them, and not to suffer them to depart from him; but he will rejoice in doing them good, and that for ever. The Scripture, when understood and applied by the Holy Spirit, is received as full evidence of the unchangeable love of God to his children, and then it quiets their troubled mind. They can believe God to be their God still, in an unchangeable covenant, and they become satisfied that he has made them, and will keep them, his people for ever. When they can thus mix faith with the promise, it then becomes the means of their resting on the faithful arm of God in the hour of temptation, and of their finding him still a God of peace: whereby peace is established in their consciences, and multiplied in their hearts. They learn to put more trust in him, as their perfectly-reconciled Father, and to approach him with more holy filial confidence. The trial of their faith, sharp as it was, yet has done them great good: it has proved their peace, and has confirmed it: they now know well that it is the peace of God; and they have been taught how to maintain it. War makes good soldiers. The trials of their grace are for the improvement of grace. Their peace has been therefore shaken, like a new-planted tree, *that it may take* deeper and faster root. Being

thus strengthened in the faith, and having the peace of God ruling in their hearts, they can meditate upon this Scripture, and turn it into a subject of prayer and praise—

O gracious God and Father, pardon my thoughts of thy love to me in Jesus. I was tempted, and ready to give way to unbelief: but the gracious provision made in thy word was the means of keeping me in the hour of temptation. O my God, make the word, in which thou hast caused me to put my trust, more precious to my soul. Open still more to me the fulness of it, and put me into happier possession of its promised blessings. I praise thee, I worship thee, for revealing this promise by the Spirit, and for applying it, by his grace, with comfort to my heart. I now set to my seal that it is true. It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation. Glory be to thee that I accept it, and enjoy the good promised in it. O Father of mercies, what am I that I should be made one of thy people, and should have thee for my God? This love surpasseth knowledge. O help me to understand more, give me to find more of thy covenant love. Make my heart one with thee: lead me in thy one way, that I may fear thee for ever; and when temptations come, such as I have been in, grant that they may bring me nearer to thee, and may be the means of my making much use of what thou hast provided for me in thy Son's fulness. O let thy good Spirit abide with me to establish my faith in thine everlasting covenant, that I may believe thou wilt never turn from me to do me good. Merciful God, grant me this grace in every hour of need. Thou hast given me thy word for it, and therein thou hast enabled me to put my trust. On thy faitful promise I would depend, and on nothing in myself. Thou hast shewed me something of my heart, and I feel it is revolting and ready always to rebel against God; but thou hast undertaken to put thy fear into it, that it shall not depart from thee: therefore into thy faithful hands I commit it. Keep me, my God, by thy mighty power, through faith unto salvation. Amen. Amen.

Happy trials! which have so good an issue, and bring forth such peaceable fruits. My brethren, account it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations, if they lead to the exercise of grace, and occasion fervent effectual prayer. The believer, thus tried, learns by practice the necessity of being at peace with God, and of maintaining it in order to walk with God. He is put upon studying the nature of this peace. He reads and meditates upon the revealed account of it. He sees it is a perfect unchangeable peace, secured to him by the

everlasting covenant of the blessed Trinity, who have engaged to save him from all his sins and miseries, and never to turn away from doing him good. To this he trusts. He commits himself to the care of this covenant God; and he finds the promise true. In temptation he believes, and is delivered. In his warfare out of weakness he is made strong. He fights the good fight of faith, and he conquers all his enemies. He learns from trials to trust with more confidence. He not only maintains, but also improves peace with God. He depends upon what God has promised to them, who walk with him, and the promise is made good, and he learns to go on more comfortably, and daily walks closer with his heavenly Father.

The enemy looks on him with malice. He envies his state. He once knew the heaven of communion with God, but he was lifted up with pride, and fell. It stirs up every infernal temper in him to see the happy believer, who had fallen like him, restored to what he can never expect. Hence either as a sly serpent, or as a roaring lion, he never ceases to attempt. As soon as one wile fails, he has another ready. He is night and day plotting and scheming, waiting for an opportunity to make a seasonable attack. While conscience is at peace with God, and lives under the protection of the blood of sprinkling, he tempts in vain. But he does not despair of success. He knows he has an ally within us in fast league with sin, and therefore he still hopes to draw him into sin by surprise and assault; in which he is indefatigable. He is never tired. He is always tempting the believer, not so much to gross offence, as to spiritual wickedness. Sly injections, legal insinuations, and self-righteous thoughts, are his most common temptations. With these he tries to shake the peace of conscience, and he forms his attack generally in this manner:

How can you be a child of God, and yet be as you are? There is nothing in you, for which God should look upon you, and love you. What have you? What ceasing from evil, what learning to do well, to recommend you to him? How can God love any thing, unless it be agreeable to his will, and what can he delight in unless it be conformable to his image? But do you live up to his will, and is his image perfectly renewed in you? Have you grace, and do you live up to it? Are you a Christian, and are you like Christ? How are your duties? Just as they should be? You know they are not, and how can God be pleased with them, when you are not pleased with them yourself? How is your walk? Is it such

as becometh your high calling—close with God, and at a vast distance from sin and the world? How is your warfare? Is the whole armour of God kept buckled on? And are you always, in the strength of the Lord, a conqueror? Examine, and try yourself. Bring forth that one good thing, for which God should love you, and bestow his blessing upon you. You have no such thing. You have nothing to merit, yea, nothing to recommend you to the Divine favour: and, therefore, is it not great presumption to fancy, that God will love such a one as you, whose just desert is wrath and everlasting destruction?

These are some of the depths of Satan. He knows how strongly we are by nature attached to the covenant of works, and that if he can get the believer to look off from Jesus, expecting to see something in himself, for which God should love him, he shall then weaken his faith and shake his peace. In this snare he has catched many a child of God. The temptation is suitable to the workings of our legal minds; it flatters our self-righteous hopes; and is vastly pleasing to the pride of our carnal hearts. No wonder, then, so long as there is flesh in us as well as spirit, this artful suggestion should be sometimes received in this manner—Have I any thing for which God would esteem me and bless me? I wish I could discover some amiable temper, or some praiseworthy deed, which might recommend me to the particular regard of God. Indeed, at present, I have not any such; but I hope to attain it some time or other. If I do but use more diligence and watchfulness, and wait more constantly in the means of grace, perhaps I may attain it soon. However, there can be no harm in trying. I will exert myself. And I hope the day will come, when I shall be some way deserving of the Divine favour.

Here the temptation has taken place. As the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtlety, so is this man's mind corrupted with the simplicity that is in Christ. The subtle serpent has attacked the liberty of the child of God, and has darkened his understanding, and obscured his view of gospel grace. His eye is not now single: his heart is not now simple in the finished salvation. He has been deceived into a legal dependence, and is giving way to a spirit of bondage. If he was left to himself, the enemy would lead him captive at his will. Satan desires to have him, that he may sift him as wheat, but he is not suffered to blow any thing away, except a little chaff: for the Holy Spirit, in whose keeping he is, discovers and *defeats* the attempts of Satan. He brings to his mind, and *enables him* to make use of what he before knew of the doc-

times of grace. The present trial requires the practice, and affords occasion for the improvement, of his former lessons. He had learnt from Scripture, truths very different from the suggestions to which he was ready to yield. He was therein taught that the Father's love to his children does not suppose merit in them. Grace does not follow works: for then grace would be no more grace. Election is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God who sheweth mercy. For we are saved freely by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God. The election of grace is from mere love and sovereign favour, and has no motives to influence it but the good pleasure of the Divine will. The objects of it are not the worthy but the unworthy—not innocent, but fallen man—sinners, as such, no way conditioned or qualified—the lost, the helpless, the ungodly—yea, the chief of sinners—open enemies and rebels against God. They are not saved by works of righteousness, which they have done, or can do, lest any of them should boast: for boasting is absolutely excluded. Salvation was so contrived, was so wrought out, and is so applied, that he who glorieth shall have nothing left him to glory in, but the Lord. No flesh can glory in his presence: for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

So soon as the Spirit of God opens this view of the exceeding riches of Divine grace, the believer sees his mistake. He finds that he was departing from the simplicity of the gospel, by supposing that the love of God followed merit, and that he should be loved more according as his walk recommended him. His eyes are opened. The delusion vanishes. The perfect freeness, and the absolute sovereignty of the Father's love, as revealed in Scripture, is manifested to him. He reads, and mixes faith with what he reads, and so recovers himself out of the snare of the devil. Some such passage as this is made the means of his deliverance, Psal. ciii. 17. 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him.' Precious words! full of rich consolation to those, who have been tempted to seek some qualifications in themselves, on account of which they might be entitled to the love of God, and who have been distressed upon their not finding it. The Holy Spirit teaches such persons to look out of themselves, to an object exactly suitable to their case. He directs them to the Divine mercy—a never-failing spring of comfort—to that mercy, which reacheth from eternity to eternity—and which *confers its richest* favours, not for the worthiness

of the receiver, but to the praise of the grace of the giver. Here he would have them fix their eyes, and expect relief to their hearts. Out of the fulness of mercy they may always receive grace for grace; for the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him. Every word is weighty. Meditate upon it, O my soul, and may the consideration of each lead thee to exalt that mercy of God which is over all his works.

Jehovah is the word here rendered Lord. It is the incommunicable name, expressive of the incommunicable nature of the godhead. It signifies the peculiar manner of the Divine existence, which is in, and of itself, underived, and independent. O how happy is it for thee, that there is mercy in the self-existent godhead, and that every perfection in it will be for ever exalted, even justice itself, for the exercise of mercy. May the Holy Spirit teach thee more of its nature, and make thee daily more acquainted in thine experience with its free grace and free gifts.

Mercy is that perfection in Jehovah, which disposes him to save miserable sinners: not a blind mercy, such as infidels dream of—but consistent with the honour of his law, and exercised to the glory of its holy precepts, and of its just sanctions; therefore, mercy and truth are so often mentioned together in Scripture. God will not shew any mercy to sinners, but such as tends to establish his truth. Not one of his words can be broken, nor can one tittle of them ever fail. He will be justified in all his sayings, and clear when he is judged: he will be true and just, whenever he is merciful: his mercies being all covenant mercies, and all given in and through Christ Jesus. All men are by nature children of wrath, and only they, who are chosen and called in Christ Jesus, are saved from wrath. These are vessels of mercy. His mercy is to them the love of a tender parent to his miserable children. He pities them, and determines to save them from their sins; in due time he quickens them, gives them eyes to see, and hearts to believe his love to them in Jesus, as the apostle witnesses—'God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.'

But for what reason, and upon what account, is he merciful to them? His mercy has no motive, but his own will. The objects of his mercy are corrupt fallen creatures, deserving his wrath, even as others; and therefore he does not deal with *them upon* the footing of desert. If he shewed them mercy

for any foreseen works of theirs, because he knew they would repent and believe the gospel, and walk worthy of it, mercy would then be turned into justice, and would lose both its name and its nature. Whereas, he saith unto Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. It is from mine own freedom and sovereignty, that I have mercy on any sinners. The cause is in myself, and not in them. I have compassion on whom I will. It is from mine own mere love, that I have determined to be gracious to them; and my love has determined to save them, and the way also in which I will save them. I have appointed the end and the means at the same time. Of mine own motion and good-will I have resolved to give my Son for them, and my Spirit to them, that they may repent and believe the gospel, and walk worthy of it, and so I may bring them through my tender mercies to eternal salvation. If this was not the case, how could the description be true, that mercy is *from everlasting to everlasting*. The mercy of God knows no variableness, nor shadow of turning. It is always the same. His fatherly heart ever entertained thoughts of mercy towards them: for when he shews them mercy, it is said to be according to the eternal purpose, which he had purposed in Christ Jesus—not for their merits, but for his mercy's sake—not for what they have any claim to, but for his own name's sake. He gives all from mercy, and he would have all the glory returned to the mercy of the giver. What he gives, that he continues, and according to covenant engagements. Covenant mercies are sure mercies. I will make an everlasting covenant for you, (says he,) even the sure mercies of the Beloved. They have already been made sure to him: he is now in full possession of every promised mercy; and he has received them, not as a private person, but as the head of the body, the church. He keeps them for the use of his church-members; and as sure as the crown is upon his head, so surely will it be upon every one of their heads: for they are in the same covenant with him, whose sure mercies reach from eternity to eternity. O what a view is here open to the eye of faith! Mercy always purposing, and in due time bestowing its free blessings upon sinners—mercy, without beginning, and without ending. The Holy Spirit often calls upon us to behold it in this light; for he has not celebrated any of its Divine properties so much as this. It is frequently the noble subject of thanksgiving in the Psalmist's hymns: he has dedicated the 136th entirely to the

praise of mercy; and going through the works of nature, providence, and grace, he ascribes them, one by one, to that mercy which endureth for ever. O happy, thrice happy objects of it! What was in the heart of the Father of mercies towards you from everlasting, will be so to everlasting. His sure mercies are yours; his compassions towards you fail not. Whatever you want for your successful walk, he has promised to give you. Be not discouraged then: he will supply all your wants, not for your sakes, but for his mercies' sake. Are you sensible of your unworthiness? That's well, mercy is for such. It can have no glory, but from such as you. Trust it, and be assured you will find, that it endureth for ever and ever.

If a doubt should arise in your mind—It is true, mercy in God cannot fail, but the exercise of it towards me may fail: I may so walk as to deprive myself of all claim and title to it. The Psalmist has given a direct answer to this ill-grounded suspicion. He says, The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting,

Upon them that fear him. This is their character: they fear their God. Once there was no fear of God before their eyes: but now they know him to be their Father. The Spirit of adoption has given them joy and peace in believing it. Hence a holy filial fear rules in their hearts, and influences their walk. While it operates thus, and as obedient children they fear to offend their loving Father, and desire to please him in all things, what ground have they to suspect that his mercy towards them should fail?

But may they not cease to fear him, and then he will cease to be merciful to them? No, blessed be God: He has made ample provision in this case. 'I will put my fear (says he) into their hearts, and they *shall not* depart from me.' This fear is one of the fruits of the Spirit, which he produces in all the children of God. And they have it from him as a covenant blessing, which is full security for its continuance. It is one of the graces provided for them in Jesus, by the Father's immutable love. 'I will give them (says he) one heart and one way, that they may fear me *for ever!*' The Holy Spirit is the guardian of this never-failing fear. It his office to put it, and then to keep it in their hearts. He has the whole charge of it, and therefore he has promised to abide with them for ever, that they may fear the Lord all the days of their lives.

How exactly suited is this Scripture to the case of the tempted Christian! What a full provision is there made in it *for his safety and peace!* God has mercy for him and plen-

tious redemption—mercy reaching from everlasting to everlasting—always kind to the miserable. Mercy and misery are related as sin and salvation. There is not any thing which a sinner can want, but mercy has a supply for him—a promised covenant, a never-failing supply. It is a Father's mercy, which will never leave his children, and the same mercy will not suffer them to leave him. His mind is fixed upon shewing them mercy for ever and ever; and therefore he gives them his Spirit to abide with them, and to dwell in them. He abides with them, and they live: he dwells in them, and they walk in the fear of God. And by the supply of the Spirit they go on, till they finish their course with joy.

By meditating upon this Scripture, the believer is set at liberty. Though his faith staggered a little, yet the trial of it has done him good. He has learned a useful lesson, and gained much experience by it. His reflections upon what has passed in his mind, are such as these—

O how foolish was I to forget the atonement and righteousness of my dearest Immanuel, in whom alone I have pardon and acceptance! How base was I, and ungrateful! I was tempted to expect that in myself, which I can have only in him. Vile legal creature that I am! I abhor myself for behaving so ill to my best friend. What good can I have, but what I first receive from him? I agree with the apostle, that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. I am a very sink of sin and of all uncleanness. I deserve mercy no more than the devil does. And yet I was looking out for some good quality in myself, on account of which God might be merciful to me. Whereas I am now satisfied he has no mercy, but in Jesus. All his mercies are covenant mercies, given from mere grace, and given to miserable sinners—not to make them self-admirers, but to humble them—not to lead them to think that they can bring God in debt to them for his own gifts, or for the right use of them, which is a fresh gift—but he gives all to the praise of the glory of his grace. He delighteth in mercy; and my case required mercy. It was such as his mercy could get all the honour of relieving. Therefore I ought, in the hour of temptation, to have trusted in his mercy, to have hoped in his mercy in time of trouble, and to have loved him for his mercy in time of misery. Here should my faith have directed its eye, and not to any good which I have done or can do. I should have remembered how it was with the election of grace, and with the vessels of mercy. God has one way of dealing with them all. Not by works of

righteousness which they have done, but according to his mercy he saveth them, freely, fully, eternally. All is from his own good-will from first to last. Every motive, which inclines him to do good to any sinner, is not excited by what the sinner does or is, but arises from himself. And when he bestows any good, it never is deserved, but is entirely an act of sovereign grace, flowing from the Father's love out of his Son's fulness, by the influence of the Holy Spirit; and is given and continued to magnify and exalt the mercy of the eternal Three. O how did I dishonour the Divine perfections by giving way to legal hopes, and by supposing that the Divine will would be governed by my more or less deservings? Where should I be, if I had my deservings? God forgive me: I see mine error: I am humbled for it, and I repent with shame and sorrow. I hope my past misconduct will prove a blessing to me: for it has certainly taught me to trust less to myself, and more to the word of God; to depend less upon my own doings, and more upon free-grace promises. To the word which cannot be broken I would trust in the time of need. Whoever trusts in it shall never be confounded. This I know to be true by happy experience. I will therefore read, and hear, and study it night and day. By means of it the Lord wrought a great deliverance for me. My feet were almost gone, my treadings had well-nigh slipped; but he sent out his word and saved me. I read and believed, that the Father was not reconciled to me for the goodness of my walk, but that reconciliation was planned in the great covenant before all worlds, and was carried into execution by the life and death of Immanuel; it was his peculiar, his glorious, his incommunicable work: it was his sole prerogative to make peace by the blood of his cross. O that I may be enabled to maintain it the next time my faith is tried, and to put honour and glory upon the Divine record concerning it. I read and believed, that the Father does not love me upon account of my walk, but for his mercies' sake. His mercy was towards me from everlasting. He loved me in his Son —chose me—accepted me in the Beloved—and all his dealings with me, since he called me by his grace, have come from the tender mercies of a covenant God and Father. I would not henceforth have one doubt of his being reconciled to me, and of his loving me perfectly in Jesus. My faith herein has been confirmed by my late trials. I have learned by experience to rely upon what God has spoken, for *preserving his* peace in my conscience, and his love in my

heart. Depending on his faithful word, and mighty arm, I would walk with him this day for the strengthening and increasing of those graces. This is the desire and prayer of my soul.

O Father of mercies, hear me for Jesus' sake. I acknowledge my sinfulness and unworthiness, even in my closest walk with thee. I am less than the least of thy mercies; yea, deserving the heaviest of thy vengeance. It is of the Lord's mercy, that it has not fallen upon me long ago, and I trust in his word, that it will never fall upon me. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of thine heritage? Thou retainest not thine anger against them for ever; because thou delightest in mercy. Glory be to thee for thine unspeakable mercies; for thou hast given me faith in the atonement of Jesus, by whom I have peace with thee my reconciled God, and by whom I have experienced thy great love to me. On thee, O my God, is still my hope. I look up to thee, the giver of those graces, for strength to maintain them in my daily walk. I do believe in the sacrifice and righteousness of Immanuel, Lord help mine unbelief. I find it hard to preserve in my practice, what I believe to be true in doctrine: and therefore on thy present help I must continually depend. Lord strengthen me mightily by thy Spirit in the inner man against temptations. I am daily and hourly called upon to exercise my faith, and when thy grace does not hold me up, I fall. The fiery darts of Satan easily inflame me, when they are thrown at my legal hopes, false dependences, or self-righteous tempers. My shield, which should quench them, is ready to drop out of mine hand. I should fall a prey to the enemy, and the fire would consume me, if thy mercy was not over me for good. O my God and Father, strengthen my faith against the wiles and assaults of Satan, and against the workings of mine own unbelief. When these trials come, keep me sensible of my weakness, and dependent on thy promised strength, that I may meet them strong in the Lord, and in the power of thy might. O let every trial teach me more of thy peace in my conscience, and more of thy love in my heart, that I may keep on in a steady course, walking humbly with my God. This is the work of thy good Spirit. I cannot preserve nor improve his graces, unless he be every moment present with me. He is the giver, the continuer, the increaser of them all. O God the Holy Ghost, I therefore beseech thee to water thy graces every moment. Lest any hurt them, keep them night and day:

never leave me nor forsake me, but what thou hast graciously begun, that mightily carry on in my soul. Temptations are strong, and I am weak; stand by me in the hour of need. And if my faith be tried on fiery temptations, let it come out of them, like gold out of the fire. O thou almighty Spirit, confirm by trials, improve by experience, my trust in thy promised help. Let me go on from faith to faith. Keep up the confidence of my rejoicing in my reconciled God and loving Father, that I may walk humbly with him in sweet communion, and holy fellowship, in the way everlasting. Grant me these mercies, gracious Father, for thy dear Son's sake, by the influence of the eternal Spirit, three persons in one Jehovah, to whom be equal praise for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAP. V.

The believer orders his steps according to the word, walking with a free heart in the king's highway of obedience.

MEDITATE, O my soul, upon the wonders which Divine love hath wrought for thee for thy salvation. Review the many, many mercies of thy past life; and consider, that thou art called upon to walk this day with *thy* God. What a privilege is this! He is thy God, and thou art his adopted son. O what a high honour has he conferred on thee! He has taken thee into the most noble family, yea, into the Divine household of faith. He has permitted thee to walk with him as thy Father. He has appointed the way, promised to be with thee in it, and every moment, and at every step to be doing thee good. There can be no happiness superior to this on earth. Prize it; for it is inestimable; enjoy it; for it is heaven begun. Walking with God by faith is present enjoyment of him, and will infallibly bring thee to the end of thy journey, to full and everlasting enjoyment.

Hold fast then the confidence of thy rejoicing. What thou hast been taught by the Holy Spirit, depend upon him for confirming and establishing. He has enabled thee to see the glory of the finished salvation of Jesus, and to believe the Divine record concerning it. Thou hast renounced every thing for the pardon of thy sins, but the blood-shedding of the Lamb, and every thing for acceptance, but the Lord our righteousness. Thy faith herein has been tried, and the trial ended well. Thy temptations were manifold and violent, but they

have done thee good. They have shewed thee the necessity of depending upon the perfect work of the God-man—of rejoicing wholly in Christ Jesus, and of having no confidence in the flesh. They have also been the means of convincing thee, that thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded then, but fear. And let thy fear of thyself lead thee to trust more in God. Rely on his faithful arm to maintain and carry on his own work in thy soul. Remember, he has promised it. Thy sufficiency is of God, and he has engaged to give thee grace sufficient for thee. He has undertaken, as a Father, to supply all thy wants, to deliver thee from all miseries, and to withhold from thee no manner of thing that is good. Thy salvation is safe: it rests upon a sure foundation, as sure as the covenant of the day, and the covenant of the night. These succeed each other by the will of their Creator, and have not been out of course not one single moment. The ordinances of day and night are regular and certain: so certain is thy salvation by the same unerring will. While the belief of this rules in thy conscience, and in thy heart, thou wilt be able to resist temptations. None of them will overcome thee, unless they separate between thee and thy God. Nay, they will work for thy good, if guilty fears do not wrest the shield of faith out of thine hand. O beg of God to keep thee and thy faith in the hour of trial, that thou mayest experience his faithfulness to his word. If thou put honour upon it, according to thy faith so shall it be done unto thee. Give it credit, and thy steps will be ordered aright. Thou wilt walk in love this day, as God hath loved thee. He will be thy portion, and the way in which he is to be enjoyed will be thy delight.

Set out then in this faith, with peace in thy conscience, and love in thy heart—trusting to thy God and Father; look up to him for strength to maintain and to increase these graces, and hope to receive it from his faithfulness. Now he has put a new song in thy mouth, even praise unto thy God, go on thy way believing and rejoicing. Jesus is thine with all his fulness. And he has promised thee a constant supply of the Spirit, that thou mayest have grace for grace, to enable thee to walk humbly with thy God.

Mind then, thy walk is to be ordered according to his revealed will, and in his appointed way of obedience to it; for all rational creatures are bound to obey God. As soon as he makes known his will to them, it becomes their indispensable duty: his will is one, like himself, unchangeably the same, yesterday, to-day, *and* for ever; for when revealed by the

sovereign Creator it becomes to mankind a law, which altereth not: it binds angels and men every moment, in every point and circumstance; and its obligation will never cease: for all his commandments are sure, they stand fast for ever and ever: what he has commanded is as fixed as the sun before him. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.

It pleased the sovereign Creator to enforce this holy, just, and good law by proper sanctions. Out of his mere grace he has promised life to obedience, which man engaged to perform; and he threatened death to disobedience, to which penalty man submitted: thereby this law became a covenant of works. The promise was to him, who should continue obedient in all things; for Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man who fulfilleth those things shall live by them: but, if he does not fulfil them perfectly, without one failing, he then comes under the penalty, which God has threatened to disobedience—'Cursed is he who continueth not in all things, that are written in the book of the law to do them:' this curse draws after it all the pains and penalties of the broken law in earth and in hell.

Under this law of works Adam was placed, and under it all his descendants are born: he and they are bound to keep the law in their own persons, if they would receive the promise, or liable to suffer the penalty if they transgress. Adam broke the law of works, and we all in him; for in him all have sinned: we were all in his loins, when he fell, and forfeited in his attainder. By the offence of that one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: the righteous Judge passed the sentence, and decreed, that by the law of works no flesh living should be saved: for he has proved in his word both Jews and Gentiles to be under the law, and under sin, which is the transgression of it: whereby every mouth is stopped, and all the world is become guilty before God; therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.

In the law of works there was no provision made for a surety; but it did not absolutely exclude one: therefore it left room for the covenant of grace, in which a provision was made in the person of Jesus Christ for securing the divine honour of this holy law; he undertook to stand up in man's place and stead, to magnify the precepts of the law in his life, *and to glorify* the penalties of the law in his death, that not *one jot* or tittle of it might fail till all was fulfilled: and as

he was God over all, blessed for ever, his life and death put everlasting honour upon the Divine law. His obedience was of inestimable value, and his sufferings were infinitely sufficient to take away sin. Christ is now the end of the law for righteousness: he answered the end of the law for his people by obeying and suffering for them: and every one of them can now plead by faith a perfect fulfilling of all the precepts, a perfect suffering of all the penalties in the person of their divine Surety. God the Father is faithful and just to his word and engagements with his Son: he has made known his will in the immutable record of his grace, 'that whosoever believeth in Jesus should not perish, but should have everlasting life.' How can he perish? Jesus died for him. He shall live with God in everlasting life: because Jesus lived for him. And this is the declared will of the Father concerning all that believe in his only-begotten Son.

Remember, then, O my soul, that thou art not under the law, but under grace. Thou art saved from the law, under the form of a covenant of works. Thou art not bound to keep its precepts, in order to have life for thy obedience. Thy Surety undertook to act and suffer for thee: he was to answer the law in its commands and demands to every jot and tittle. And he did. Whatever it required, whatever it threatened, was perfectly fulfilled in the person of thy God and Saviour; and he has absolutely discharged thee from it as a law of works. Thou art to have nothing to do with it in that view; nay, he has forbidden thee to keep it in hopes that thou mayest live thereby. The irreversible decree entered in the records of heaven has enacted, 'By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.' Thou art now to look upon the law, in the matter of justifying and giving life, as a woman looks upon her dead husband. She is freed from the marriage contract with him, and may now give her heart and hand to another; so art thou freed from the bond of the legal covenant. Thou art become dead to the law by the body of Christ, who has espoused and betrothed thee to himself, that serving him in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter, thou mayest bring forth fruit unto God. This is thy high privilege. Thy first husband is dead; happy for thee thou art lawfully married to another—Thy husband is thy Maker, Jehovah of hosts is his name. The Word made flesh has paid all thy debts, suffered thy punishment, wrought out a perfect righteousness, and won a crown of perfect glory for thee. O what *a divine honour has he* put upon thee! Thou art now one

with Immanuel in a bond of everlasting love. He has given himself to thee, with all he has and all he is; and it is thy happiness now, not to be thine own, but the Lord's—not to follow thine own will, but his. The law of thy Lord is liberty. As taught by his Spirit, and performed by faith, it is perfect freedom. Whilst thou walkest with him in obedience to it, and leanest on thy Beloved every step, thou wilt find deliverance from all spiritual tyranny and bondage, and wilt enjoy the light of his countenance, and the love of his heart. When the Son has thus made thee free, thou art free indeed—free, now thy heart is set at liberty to run with Jesus in the way of his commandments.

In this view, O my soul, thou canst look with delight at the most holy law. Attend to it closely, and study it carefully. In order to obey, as a Christian, these following considerations should be well understood and digested: because under the influence of them every step of thy walk is to be ordered. O pray then for the Spirit of wisdom to teach thee practically:

First, That thy walk with God in the way of obedience is not to fulfil the law, as a covenant of works. Thou art not required to do this; thou canst not do it: Immanuel, thy divine Surety, took it upon himself. Because it was impossible for thee, a fallen creature, to keep the law, so as to be justified by it, he therefore came in person to fulfil it. He honoured its precepts by his infinite obedience: he magnified its penalties by his inestimable sacrifice. And this is thy justifying righteousness. Through faith in the life and death of the God-man thou art not only freed from guilt and condemnation, from curse and hell, but art also entitled to life and glory. The law is now on thy side, and is become thy friend: it acquits thee; it justifies thee: it will give the reward promised to obedience. The law in the hand of thy Saviour has nothing but blessings to bestow upon thee: thou art to receive it at his mouth and to obey him: but not from any legal hopes of heaven, or from any slavish fears of hell: for then thou wouldst come under the covenant of works again. Whereas thou art not under the law, but under grace: mind thy privilege, and pray for grace to live up to it. Thou art not under the law, bound to keep it perfectly in thine own person, or in case of failing condemned by it, and under its fearful cause; but thou art under grace, a state of grace through faith in the obedience and sufferings of thy blessed Surety, and under the *power of grace* sweetly inclining thee to love, and mightily *enabling* thee to keep, the law of the Lord thy God. Live

thus by grace, and sin shall not have dominion over thee. Under the reign of grace, the tyrant sin is always dethroned. Obey under grace, as freely and fully saved by faith in Jesus, and this will make thy walk easy and evangelical: thou wilt go on with a free spirit, and wilt delight thyself in the ways of God, walking with him,

2. By faith, and not by sight. This is the great spring of all gospel obedience. Faith hath a universal efficacy: for thus it is written—'Without faith it is impossible to please God.' He is not pleased with the thing done, but with the principle on which it is done: he looks at the heart. Hearing the word, or saying prayers, or giving alms, or doing any thing commanded, are not pleasing in themselves; but they must be performed upon a right motive, and to a right end. And both these come from faith. The apostle mentions the motive, which had influenced every step of his Christian course, 'We walk by faith, and not by sight.'—We judge of our state by what God says of it, and we order our walk accordingly. We give credit to his witness of our being pardoned and justified freely by grace through faith, and we depend for the truth of this not on what we see, but on what we believe. We trust not on our good frames or warm feelings, or sensible comforts, or to any of the genuine fruits and effects of faith, but we trust what God says simply, as his record: and therefore we walk in a constant dependence on the truth of God in his word, and upon the faithfulness of God to his word. Some promised grace we stand in need of at every step; and we rely upon his word, which cannot be broken, and upon his faithfulness, which cannot fail. Thus we go on, and we find the promise made good, according to our faith.

Such was the apostle's walk: and is thine directed by the same motive? Search, O my soul, and examine upon what principle thou goest to duty. Is it in the obedience of faith? Dost thou take no step without the warrant of the word of God? Dost thou give full credit to what God says in it of thy state, as a justified person? And does this appear from thy dependence upon his faithfulness to make good every thing promised to them, who are in that state? Blessed art thou of the Lord, if thou art walking by his faith. O praise his holy name, who has thus highly favoured thee, and ascribe to him all the glory. So will thy end be right, as well as thy motive. True faith takes no honour to itself: it is an emptying, humbling grace. Its spring-head is in covenant love, and it is given from *distinguishing* favour and sovereign mercy: it has

no foundation, when given, but the word of God: nothing to rest on but the Divine truth: no support, but the Divine power: and no growth, but from the Divine influence. What then does it leave a man to glory in? Whoever has it, has it all from God, and while he is in his right mind, living by it, he will be disposed to give God all the glory of it; even for common mercies, as well as spiritual, he will live by the faith of the Son of God. Whether he eats or drinks, or whatever he does, he does all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, and the Father by him. And thus he will go on sweetly and happily, obeying not from slavish fears or legal hopes, but,

3. From holy love, which is the fruit and consequence of walking by faith. Faith worketh love, and then worketh by love. The faith of the gospel, as a grace of the Spirit, worketh chiefly by love to God, and to man for God's sake; for the gospel discovers the way of salvation, contrived by the eternal Three, fulfilled in the life and death of Immanuel, and applied to the sinner's heart by the eternal Spirit. Whoever is enabled to believe the gospel, will see himself an object of the covenant love of the blessed Trinity, and will therefo Father, Son, and Spirit: for we love him, says the a because he first loved us. And faith in his love to u make us that we shall neither be barren nor unfruitful. is very active. Obeying from love is very sweet: how how sweet is obedience, when the love of God is shed in the heart by the Holy Ghost who is given unto us! an almighty Agent. He overcomes the power of legal lieving workings, and puts a new spring to duty into the He manifests the love of God in Christ, his free distingu love, the exceeding riches of it, and the numerous ble flowing from it through time and eternity. In the se these mercies he excites gratitude, and puts it upon This grace has a wonderful influence. 'What return make unto the Lord!' is the devout breathing of the g heart: while the love of Christ constraineth it, all the tions follow him, and the soul delights itself in his Then none of his commandments will be grievous: n yoke itself becomes easy, and his burden light: O triun love! How active, how sweet did he find it, who cried 'I can do *all* things, I can suffer *all* things, I am mor conqueror, through him that loveth me.'

And is not this, O my soul, thy happy case! O pri *privilege*, and adorn it in thy life. Walk in love with

conciled God, and out of love to him perform all duties, and bear all crosses. Remember, thou art not required to obey, in order to be saved for thine obedience, but thou art already saved; and therefore, out of gratitude to thy dearest Saviour, thou art bound to love him and to obey him. Thou canst not love his person, and yet hate his will. 'If ye love me, (says he,) keep my commandments'—give this proof of it, keep in my way, doing my commandments. But whatever ye do, let it come from the heart. Obey me, but see it be with a willing mind, and with a free spirit. When all springs from love then my service will be perfect freedom. I would have you to do my will, but without fear: not for life, but from life; not that ye may live, but because ye live. Do it, as sons, and not as slaves: the slave abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth for ever. In this free spirit of adoption serve me, as sons of God, and heirs of God, and joint heirs with me. Stand fast therefore in the liberty, wherewith I have made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

To obey from life and salvation received and enjoyed is sweet liberty. To obey, as the condition of life and salvation, is bitter slavery: it is an intolerable yoke, because it is not possible any fallen man should so keep the law, as to live thereby. But the believer freed from this condition by Christ's keeping the law for him is in liberty, he is saved from the penalty annexed to the transgression; he is entitled to the life promised to obedience, and thereby he is delivered from legal hopes and from guilty fears. In this faith he walks on delightfully in the ways of obedience: for he is reconciled to the law through the grace that is in Christ Jesus; he loves it. O what love, says he, have I unto thy law! Because now I find it according to the promise written upon my heart. And this is a

4. Motive to gospel obedience. The new covenant runs thus—'I will put (says God,) my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them.' The heart is by nature as hard as adamant. It is enmity itself against the holy law. But the Lord here engages to take away the stony heart, and to give an heart of flesh, upon which he will write the ten commandments; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart. *The Spirit of* the living God will teach all his chil-

dren to know their Father, he will manifest to them their adoption, he will reveal to them their Father's love in Jesus, and he will make their hearts happy in the enjoyment of it. Then the holy fruits of this love will appear towards man. It will work sweetly in benevolence, and effectually in beneficence. The love of God will open the contracted heart, enlarge the selfish, warm the cold, and bring liberality out of the covetous. When the Holy Spirit teaches brotherly love he overcomes all opposition to it. He says to his disciples—'Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' And he makes them kind one to another: they shew it by every good word and work. Thus, by manifesting to them the Father reconciled in Jesus, and by enabling them to love man for his sake, he writes upon their hearts the two great commandments, on which hang all the law and the prophets. The love of God, says the apostle to the Romans, is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost; and to the Thessalonians, Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. Thus he engages the affections of the soul to the holy law, and inclines the inner man to love obedience. It ceaseth to be a yoke and a burden. How easy it is to do what one loves! If you dearly love any person, what a pleasure is it to serve him! What will not love put you upon doing or suffering to oblige him? Let love rule in the heart to God and to man, his law will then become delightful, and obedience to it will be pleasantness. The soul will run, yea, inspired by love, it will mount up with wings as eagles, in the way of God's commandments.

Happy are the people, that are in such a case! And is it not, O my soul, in some measure thine? Hast thou not been taught to love God, and his ways? Since thou hast been acquainted with him as thy loving Father in Jesus, has not thy faith been working by love to him, and to his will, and to his whole household and family? Remember this is promised. All the children of God are to be taught to know and to love their heavenly Father. This is the very tenor of the covenant of grace, which the Almighty Spirit has undertaken to fulfil: and he cannot fail in his office: it is his crown and glory to make good his covenant engagements: O trust him then, and put honour upon his faithfulness: he has promised to guide thee with his counsel, and to strengthen thee with his might, in the way of obedience to thy reconciled God.

What is within thee, or without thee, to oppose thy walking in love with him, he will incline thee to resist, and he will enable thee to overcome. O what mayest thou not expect from such a Divine friend, who is to abide with thee on purpose to keep thy heart right with God. What cannot he do, what will he not do for thee? Such as is the love of the Father, and of the Son, such is the love of the Holy Ghost, the same free, perfect, everlasting love: read his promises of it: meditate on them: pray to him for increasing faith to mix with them; that he, dwelling in the temple of thy heart, thou mayest have fellowship there with the Father and with the Son. Whatever in thee is pardoned through the Son's atonement, pray the Holy Spirit to subdue, that it may not interrupt communion with thy God. And whatever grace is to be received out of the fulness of Jesus in order to keep up and to promote that communion, entreat the Holy Spirit to give it thee with growing strength: but pray in faith, nothing wavering. So shall the love of God rule in thy heart: and then thou shalt be like the sun, when it goeth forth in its might, shining clearer and clearer to the perfect day. O let thy course be like his, as free, as regular, and as communicative of good, that thy daily petition may be answered, and that the will of thy Father may be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.

When all these things concur, what can be wanting to make the way of obedience easy and pleasant? It is not now a hard burden, impossible to be borne. The Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus hath made it easy. He has reconciled the believer to the law: for he shews it to him in surety, magnified and made honourable—magnified infinitely in his life—made everlastingly honourable in his death: so that the Father can get the fullest glory to every Divine perfection, even to his justice, by saving sinners through faith in the righteousness of his Son; he can be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. The believer, persuaded of this, is reconciled to God: being no longer under the law, as a covenant of works, but under grace, he loves the law, and walks with God in sweet obedience to it. He sets out, and goes on every step, in faith—trusting to the acceptance of his person, and of his services in the Beloved; he does not work now, in order to be saved, but he works, because he is saved: and he ascribes all he does to the praise of the glory of free grace. He works from gratitude, and the faith of God's elect always does. It never fails to shew itself by love. The Holy Spirit wins the heart by revealing to it the love of God, and thereby draws

out the affections after him. When the commandment saith, 'My son, give me thy heart;' the son is ready, Lord, take it, and seal it in thine for ever. And whatever inbred enmity may remain against giving it to the Lord, the Holy Spirit has undertaken to subdue it. It is his office to take away the stony heart, and to create a heart of flesh, soft and willing to receive the impression of this grace. With the same finger, which once wrote the holy law upon tables of stone, it is now written upon the fleshly tables of the heart. And then the love of God, and the love of man, are clearly taught, and effectually enforced. What a change does this make in obedience! Hard things are now done with ease. Rough ways are made smooth. Painful things become delightful. The labour of love is sweet labour; because the heart is in it. The feet run; the hands work: all the faculties are ready to exert themselves, when love commands.

O my God, let it be thus with me. Thou hast given me an earnest desire to walk with thee in thy ways, guide me in them by thine almighty Spirit. Let him abide with me, holy Father, as the Spirit of adoption, that I may always serve thee, as thy reconciled child, not under the law, but under grace. I would gladly walk with thee every step by faith, and that faith working by love to thee and to thy whole will. O God, give me grace sufficient for my holy walk. Let thy faithful promise be daily fulfilled: write thy law still plainer in mine inward parts, and let it be more fairly copied out of my life. I want to love thee more, as thou knowest. O my God, keep my heart sensible of the exceeding riches of thy love to me, and let the growing sense of this increase mine to thee. In the strength of thy good Spirit, enable me to overcome inward and outward opposition to my walking with thee in love. Let him strengthen me mightily in the inner man for every labour of love. From him cometh power to embrace and to cleave with full purpose of heart unto the ways of God —to love what he loves—and to hate what he hates. O thou blessed Spirit of the Father and of the Son, make me willing, keep me able to enjoy the Father's love in his Son: and let it be a growing love, abounding yet more and more in knowledge, and in all sensible feeling, that I may run and not be weary, may be going on to the end, and not be faint. Even so: let it be done unto thy servant according to thy word, wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Let me have fellowship with the *Father in his* love, through the salvation of his Son, by thine *influence upon* my heart, now, henceforth, and for ever. Amen.

CHAP. VI.

The walk of the believer in the way of duty.

It is very hard to go in a straight course and for any length of time. The hinderances are many: to understand the nature and obligation of duty, to enter upon it with right motives, to perform it in a proper temper; to go through it without backwardness, or weariness, not by constraint, but willingly, and to find the true end of doing it answered, these are great difficulties: but they will be removed in some measure out of the believer's walk; if he attend to what was said before of obedience in general, and if he be enabled to bring it into practice.

It cannot be too often repeated, that the true believer is not under the law, as a covenant of works—bound to keep the precept for life: or liable to the penalty of death. He is not under the law in this respect, but under grace. He is one with Christ, who kept the precept, and suffered the penalty for him, as his surety, and in his stead. He has put in his plea, and taken the benefit of Christ's suretyship. His plea has been admitted; and therefore he is in a state of perfect acceptance. He stands in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free. Grace reigns in him, and over him, and renders his obedience perfect freedom. He obeys, but it is all in faith. He works, but it is from a sense of the Father's love to him in his Son. Gratitude, taught by the Holy Spirit, influences his heart and life. His heart has the love of God written upon it, and his life manifests it. He serves God with a thankful mind and without fear, and cheerfully does all the good he can to man for God's sake.

The believer will never get on in the way of duty, unless he learns to obey upon these gospel principles. He will stand in need of their assistance at every step: for he will meet with constant opposition to them. The flesh will not come under grace. The carnal mind is always legal. The old man of sin knows nothing but working for life, and will not submit to any other way. Our sinful nature is altogether for the covenant of works. Jews, Turks, heathens, and nominal Christians, are all upon one plan: they expect God will be merciful to them for their doings. And the children of God are exercised with this self-righteous spirit more or less all their days. Is it not, O my soul, thy grief and burden? Art thou not *daily plagued with it in* thy duties? And though thy princi

ples be very evangelical, yet they too often fail thee in practice. O beg of God then, earnestly and often, that thou mayest be cast into the mould of the gospel, quite evangelized in thy mind, and mayest perform all duties upon such motives as he himself requires and approves.

Duty is a debt owing to God—due from the creature to the Creator. The obligation to it arises from the absolute dependence of the one upon the other; and it consists in acknowledging this in the appointed way, by a perfect and continual service of every faculty—the creature being entirely subject to the will of the Almighty Creator, and living in never-failing conformity to it: for the will of God doth bind all men on earth, and angels and glorified spirits in heaven. It is an unchangeable law, obliging for ever all creatures to obedience, not only on account of the matter contained in it, but also with respect to the sovereign authority of the Almighty Lawgiver. And this obligation Christ in the gospel has not in the least dissolved, but on all occasions has confirmed and strengthened. How decisive are these words! 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil;' to fulfil the law in mine own person, as the surety for my people, and to put the love of it into their hearts, and to engage them, and to enable them to practise it in their lives; though not for the same end, for which I fulfilled it.

Duty is always one and the same—a debt always due to God. But the debt of obedience being withheld, and the death of suffering being incurred, the believer is taught to plead his discharge from suffering under Christ, and his fulfilling of obedience in the righteousness of Christ. With this faith he has a delightful prospect of duty. God is now at peace with him. God loves him in his Son. It is his high privilege to enjoy the sense of those distinguishing favours. For this end he is admitted to walk with his God: what an honour is this! Having received the adoption of sons, he is blessed with his Father's love, and is taken into near fellowship with him. What a happiness is this! 'Son, all that I have is thine, it is freely given to thee in Jesus, and thou art now called upon to enjoy me and mine in thy holy walk.' Here duty becomes his privilege. It is exalted and spiritualized into a gospel grace. He is bound to it, but it is by the cords of love. The pleasing bonds of gratitude tie his heart to obedience, to a free, holy, evangelical obedience. He obeys, not as a slave, but as a son—not for fear, but because Christ *has set him* at liberty—not that God may accept, pardon, and

justify him, but because God has done all for him, and will do all in him—not that he may have heaven for his obedience, but because heaven is reserved for him, and he for it. He therefore looks at duty, as greatly refined by the gospel. Every act of it done in faith, is an act of fellowship with the Father and with the Son; and by the grace of the Spirit every act brings the Father's love through the Son's salvation into experience. He has communion with his God in all he does. This ennobles duty. It is hereby raised to a divine honour: for it is hereby made, to them who are in Christ, the highest privilege they can have on this side heaven.

When the Holy Spirit writes the law upon the heart, he then teaches this obedience of faith. He does not abolish duty, but he enforces it upon right motives, and directs it to a right end. The same duties remain in the gospel, but not upon the same obligation. Law duties as conditions of life cannot be fulfilled. The Judge himself has decreed, that by the works of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. Therefore the law as a covenant of works, does not enter into the believer's obedience. He obeys because he is freed from this covenant—not freed from doing the same duties, which this covenant required, but freed from doing them upon law motives, neither expecting the promised life on account of keeping the precepts, nor fearing the threatened penalty on account of not keeping them. It is his privilege to obey, because he is saved. He works from a free spirit, and with a thankful heart. He does all his duties in faith. He is spiritual in them, acting upon the endearing motive of God's love to him in Christ, as it has been revealed to his heart by the Holy Spirit. He hopes for the acceptance of them only through the intercession of Christ: and after he has done them ever so well, he desires grace from Christ to return him all his glory. Thus in every duty he aims at fellowship with God in Christ through the Spirit, and seeks to present an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

Whatever thou art required to do, remember, O my soul, that thou art under grace, and it is thy privilege to do it in faith. View the two tables in the hand of thy Saviour, and receive the ten commandments from his mouth. Happy for thee, Jesus is thy lawgiver. His Spirit will gospelize thine obedience. He will bring thine heart into it. He will set thee in the chariot of love, and thou shalt ride on prosperously: he will *oil the wheels of* duty, and they shall run easy and

pleasant. Thou shalt be carried sweetly through duty, thy Beloved being present and conversing with thee in it; yea, thy faith working by love to him will render fellowship with God in all thou doest, the joy of thy heart and the glory of thy life.

O beg of thy Divine Teacher thus to spiritualize thine obedience. From him only canst thou learn the two great commandments, which are the sum and substance of the will of thy God. In the first his nature is revealed, and then his worship. He is the Lord thy God, Jehovah thy Alehim; Jehovah means the self-existent godhead; and Alehim, the persons in covenant, Father, Son, and Spirit, partakers of the same self-existence, and Divine glory, without any difference, or inequality. There can be no true religion without the true object of worship, and he cannot be worshipped unless he be known: therefore it is an indispensable duty to know the Lord God. But how shall fallen man attain to this knowledge? He lost it by sin, and he cannot by any reasoning faculty or power of his own recover it. It is a matter of fact, that no man did ever, by searching, find out God. And attested, by infallible authority, that the world, by its wisdom, knew not God. There is no true description of the godhead, but what is revealed in Scripture; and it is altogether from the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that any one savingly understands what is revealed. He the Spirit of wisdom and revelation opens the eyes of the mind, sets the object before them, and gives a clear idea of it. He takes of the things of God, and shews them to his disciples. He does not lead them into abstracted reasonings about the Divine nature, or what the absolute godhead is, but his lessons are useful and practical. He teaches the knowledge of the persons in Jehovah, as they are related to sinners in the covenant of grace. Through him the Father is made known, 'Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, Abba, Father,' Rom. viii. 15. Through him the Son is believed in: for no man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. He discovers the Father's love in the Son, with its rich graces and abundant blessings, as it is written; we have 'received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.' He makes known the Giver, and the gifts, and he is received for that very purpose. He shines into the heart, to give the light of *the know*ledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus *Christ.* And this is saving acquaintance with the Father and

with the Son; for hereby the understanding is restored to the image of God; and the new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

O what a mercy is this! What can call for greater praise! And this mercy, O my soul, is thine. Unspeakably gracious has the Lord been to thee. He has given thee the knowledge of himself. His image is upon thine understanding. His light is shining upon it: certainly it is as great an act, as when he first commanded the light to shine out of darkness; for hereby I believe in him, I know him to be my *Father*. O precious name! The love of his heart, and it is infinite: the blessings of his love, and they are numberless, he has called me to enjoy, freely, of mere grace, of his own sovereign good will—called me to the adoption of sons, to the noblest dignity, yea, to everlasting honour, to be a son of the most high God—God is my Father—my new birth is from him—that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and has fellowship with the Father of spirits. Behold, what manner of love this is! No parent ever loved, or can love, a child as my Father which is in heaven loves me. And I desire in the sense of this to love him, to cleave to him with full purpose of heart, and gratefully to devote all I have, and am, to his service, and to his glory. O thou Divine revealer of this love, enlighten mine understanding, and influence my affections, that I may grow in the knowledge of my Father in Jesus: for,

First, In him the Father only is to be known. He is his Father, as our covenant head, and therefore ours in him. God is not a Father to any, but in Christ. The name Father respects Christ, as the first-begotten, and then all his seed. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, and depends for its adoption on the Father of their Lord Jesus Christ. He undertook to be made man, to live and to die for the many sons whom he was to bring to glory: and in consequence of his undertakings, it pleased the Father to lay up all fulness of grace for them in the God-man, their covenant head; and it pleases the Spirit to witness of this fulness, and to enable believers to receive out of it grace for grace. Thus he reveals Immanuel to them. They know him and are one with him. He is their Lord and their God, and by faith they live in him and upon him. Trusting to his atonement and righteousness they have peace with their reconciled Father, and they enjoy his love shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. Waiting in *the appointed ways* they grow in the knowledge of the

wonderful person God-Jesus. They see more of the Divine glory of his salvation work, and by depending on it daily, they enjoy more of the things which accompany salvation. Thrice happy are they, whose acquaintance with Jesus is thus increasing. Their happiness has a boundless subject. They may study on, and they will find in him new worlds of delight to eternity. O ye highly favoured, read and adore the wonders already wrought for you; among which, these are not the least; 'We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even his Son Jesus Christ, who is the true God, and eternal life.' Blessed knowledge! they have an understanding given them, and they are savingly acquainted with the Father, and with the Son, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Jehovah is their Alehim. Thus they learn the first part of their duty, which leads them to the

Second, Namely, to love the persons in the godhead, because they stand in this most endearing relation to them. They love the Father, who is their Father in Jesus. They have not only heard of, and believed in, but have also enjoyed, this precious love. It has been shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost: who has overcome all resistance to his love; yea, has made enmity itself yield to it. Having purified the conscience by faith, he then purifies the heart: he pours into it a sense of that love, which gave his co-equal Son for them, and all the blessings in earth and in heaven with him. Thereby he draws up the affections in holy desires to be more united to the Father of mercies. It is the property of love, to desire to be united to the beloved object. The Holy Spirit has discovered the object, and has given the desire, and he fulfils all the desires of his own creating. He teaches all the children of God to know their Father; and to experience his love to them in his Son, and then they cannot but love him. He creates the new heart for this very purpose: and makes it sensible that the Father's love is all received through the Son, and therefore the Father and the Son are beloved with an undivided affection.

The Son is his office name. It should never be heard without putting us in mind of the wonderful love of our God in his undertakings. He covenanted to be made flesh. What a miracle of love is that! He engaged with his Father to be the surety for his people, to do their work, to suffer their *punishment*; and then God and man, one Christ for ever, was *to have all* fulness of covenant blessings to give his people.

The Father has no love, the Spirit bestows no grace, but what comes through Christ. A believer is therefore taught in every thing he does to have fellowship with Christ. His safety, his happiness, his hopes of happiness to-day and for ever, are blessings to be received out of Immanuel's fulness: for he is the head over all things to the church, which is the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. And while the member is receiving life, and sense, and happiness, from the fulness of the Head, he will have fresh motives to love his divine Saviour. What can fix his affections, if gratitude to Jesus cannot? He has every thing in him that can win the heart. He has beauty to engage love, blessings to increase love, glories to increase love to him for evermore. He is beauty without a rival. Whatever is charming in any earthly object is but a ray from him, and should lead to him: it is but a beam to point out the matchless graces of Immanuel. And so is the loveliness of heavenly objects: saints and angels have nothing beautiful, but what the love of Jesus has put upon them. He is the Lord and giver of all their glory. How glorious then must he be? He is mine, says the believer, and my property in him makes him indeed glorious in mine eyes. Once I saw no beauty in him, that I should desire him; but now he is my beloved and my friend. I can see every thing truly lovely in my Lord and my God. Whatever else courts my heart appears to be but a shadow: the substance is my Jesus. He endears himself daily to me by his numberless favours. I am always receiving out of his fulness, some blessing, which makes him the centre of my happiness. Every look of faith discovers in him some new excellency, and brings from him some fresh kindness, and thereby engages my heart still more to its precious Saviour. And when I look forward to the glory to be revealed, when I shall see my Jesus face to face, and shall be like him, and shall enjoy him, and in him all the blessings of the eternal Three for ever, O this is too big for present thought; yet it constrains me to give up my whole soul to this heavenly lover. Glorify him daily in me, thou faithful witness of Jesus, and give me continual reason to love thee with the same undivided affection wherewith thou hast enabled me to love the Father and the Son.

The Holy Spirit is Jehovah, a person in the self-existent godhead, equal with the Father in every attribute. His office name is Spirit; the idea is taken from air, such as we breathe, to denote his being the breather, or inspirer, of spiritual life. Every thing *done by him* in this character tends to holiness,

and therefore he is called the *Holy* Spirit. His office in the covenant, as well as his co-equality with the Father and the Son, entitle him to equal worship, and to equal love. For he undertook to carry into execution the purposes of the Father's love in Jesus. Their fulfilment depends entirely upon his grace. The Son has been incarnate; he has brought in everlasting righteousness, and made the atonement for sin: the Father is satisfied with his finished work, and has demonstrated his acceptance of it: the God-man is now upon the throne of glory with all power in heaven and earth. To this the Holy Spirit bears witness: it is his Divine office, to apply the salvation of Jesus, and to make it effectual. He does all *in* the heirs of promise. The Father gave them to the Son, the Son redeemed them, but they are in the common mass of corruption, dead in trespasses and sins, till the Spirit of life enter into them. They feel not their guilt nor their danger, till he convince them. They are quite ignorant of God, and of the things of God, till he make them wise unto salvation. They cannot believe in Jesus, till the Spirit of faith enable them. They cannot rejoice in the Father's love, till the Comforter makes them sensible of it. They are without strength, until they be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man. They cannot go on in their Christian course, but by a constant supply of the Spirit. They cannot hold out to the end, but from his abiding with them for ever. So that he is the Lord and giver of life. He begins the good work, and he confirms it, until the day of Jesus Christ. Every motion of spiritual life is from him, and all those whom he makes alive, he makes sensible of the debt which they owe him. He manifests his love to them, and thereby he engages their love to him. They experience how great the love of the Spirit is. They are sensible of their obligations to him, and desire to be thankful for them. Thus their affections return to the proper object of love and worship. They receive daily the blessings of the Father's love through faith in the Son's salvation, by the applying power of the Holy Spirit, and hereby they are reconciled to the first and great commandment; it is become the delight of their souls to love the Lord God.

Here consider, O my soul, whether thou art acting upon the principle of gratitude to thy God. If thou art, then his yoke will be easy, and his burden light. Thou wilt not go to duty in bondage, hoping to gain his love by the desert of what thou doest, or fearing to be beaten with many stripes for not doing *it well.* Thy God whom thou servest is thy most loving

friend, and tenderest father. He loved thee in Jesus freely by grace, not by works done by thee, or to be done. Immanuel is thy Saviour: his love to thee is made up of miracles: no understanding of angels or of glorified spirits can conceive how great it is: for it passeth knowledge. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit has revealed it unto thee. He loves thee, as the Father and the Son do, with the same Divine affection. Thy debt is equal, thy gratitude should be the same to the blessed Trinity. In the sense of thine infinite obligations thou art called upon to walk in the way of duty. Love to the person whom thou art to serve, will make service pleasant. And thou dost love thy God. He has given himself with every covenant blessing to be thine, and all these blessings are to be enjoyed in thy walk with him. With this faith look at duty. It is the expression of gratitude to thy dearest friend, and it is the way to enjoy his Divine friendship. He requires it out of love to thee; and would have thee to do it out of love to him. O! how exalted is duty, when communion with God is carried on by it! He would have thee to keep close to him, in order to maintain a sense of his gracious presence in thy heart, and so to walk with him as to have his love to thee confirmed at every step; and therefore thou shouldest seek to preserve a constant nearness and holy fellowship with him in every thing thou doest. This is the will of thy God. May it be thine, O my soul. Study this glorious way of gospel duty. Pray to be taught it better, and to go on in it more spiritually every day. Bring it into all thy affairs. In thy calling as well as in the means of grace, in temporal as well as in heavenly matters, set the Lord always before thee, and so live and act in every thing as to keep up communion with thy God and Father in Jesus by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

When God is thus become the dear object of thy happy heart, then every way wherein his love is to be enjoyed will become delightful. The time, the place, the means of meeting with him, will be greatly desired and much longed for. Thy heart cannot but be where thy treasure is. Thou wilt want no spur to duty, no whip to drive thee to ordinances: it will be enough that the Lord is there. As when he said to David, Seek ye my face—his heart replied, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. His heart said it: his affections were set upon God, and he was ready to seek, wherever God was to be found. No hunted hart ever panted more after the water-brooks, than his soul did after God. His hope in doing any thing was to have God's *gracious presence* with him. And his happiness

in it was to have communion with God. This is gospel duty. And what a glorious privilege is it! O that it may be my happy experience thus to meet God in all his ways, and to enjoy him in my daily walk. That thou mayest grow in this Divine fellowship, consider, O my soul, some of the duties of the first table, and learn to practise them upon gospel principles. The first and chief is *prayer*, which consists in keeping up daily converse with thy God upon all occasions. This is the breathing of the new-born soul. It wants to draw the air of heaven, and to live in its own proper element. There is a way opened for it unto the throne of glory, and the children of God may approach it with boldness: for it is a throne of grace, and he that sitteth upon it loves to hear and to answer their petitions. He is *their* Father, 'I go, says Jesus, to my Father, and to your Father; my Father himself loveth you; ask what ye will of him in my name, he will do it.' This is the beloved object of prayer—a reconciled Father in Jesus—whose heart is full of tenderness to the complaints and miseries of his family—his promises are the declarations of his pure love—a dependence upon his fulfilling them does honour to his truth and faithfulness, and always brings down the blessing. The Holy Spirit abides with the children of God to teach them thus to pray in faith. He helps their infirmities in prayer, strengthens their graces, and bestows on them their comforts. He enables them to come with boldness, and to have access with confidence. Whatever their Father has freely promised to give them in Jesus, they will ask in faith, nothing wavering: for they know his promises cannot fail. They find them daily fulfilled, whereby their holy familiarity with their Father increases. He draws nearer to them, and they draw nearer to him. This their mutual intercourse may be interrupted, but it cannot be entirely broken off. God is always disposed to hear, although the believer be not always able to pray rejoicing. It is still his privilege, although he may not find any great delight in it; but if he continue to make constant use of his privilege, his delight will return, and God will fulfil to him the gracious promise—I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.

Thus the child of God learns to love prayer, yea, to pray without ceasing. He lives under his Father's eye, and in a dependence on his Father's care for him night and day. And he has hereby as true and lasting fellowship with the things of God in his soul, as he has with the things of this world in his body.

O what an exalted privilege is this! How highly is prayer hereby ennobled! It is not a law duty to an absolute God: but a gracious intercourse with a covenant God—not practised that he may love us: but because he loves us—not to make us his children: but because we are his children. It should be performed always in this faith. If there be infirmities in it, such as wandering, coldness, or the like, we are to remember that we are not heard for the goodness of our prayers, nor answered for the fervency of them. That which makes our persons accepted obtains acceptance for our services also. We and all we do are only accepted in the Beloved: 'For through Jesus Christ we have access by one Spirit unto the Father,' Eph. ii. 18. Our access is through Jesus Christ. Trusting to his finished salvation we enter into the presence of the Father, and guided by the Holy Spirit, we pray in faith. Whatever we ask in the Son's name, we know that we have the petitions which we desired of him. This spiritualizes prayer, and puts glory upon it: because there is heavenly fellowship with God in it, with the Father, through the Son, by the one Spirit.

These are some of the privileges of Christian prayer. Thou goest, O my soul, to meet thy God in it—to converse with thy Father—to call on him for the fulfilling of his promises made in Jesus—to wait on him for his answers—and to give him his glory. O what blessed seasons hast thou enjoyed in this communion with thy God! How has he manifested his nearness to thee, and bounty towards thee? Hast thou not found his heart open, his ears open, and his hands open, to grant thee the request of thy lips? And when thou hast not found such sweet fellowship with thy God in prayer, yet thy dependence on his faithful word has been exercised and improved. Thou hast left thy petitions with thy friend and advocate, trusting to that most glorious description of him in Rev. viii. 3, 4. 'And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.' O thou great Angel of the covenant thus present my prayers. They are nothing worth, but as perfumed with thy divine odours. Let them ever ascend before God out of thy hand, with the smoke of the incense of thy sacrifice and intercession. Blessed Spirit of prayer, increase my faith, that I may trust more to a prayer-

hearing God and Father, who is always ready to grant every good thing promised to his children in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Praise and prayer go together. The prayer of faith will afford continual matter for praise. The one is a dependence on God for every promised blessing, the other is the acknowledgment of his having bestowed it. Innocent man had his heart in this sweet work: it was his happiness. Every breath in paradise was praise. The redeemed man has more reason. His obligations are far greater, than Adam was under, to his God—raised from his fall—saved from the guilt and misery of it—chosen and called to this salvation by mere grace—through faith a partaker of it—an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ. O what motives are these to continual thankfulness! And these motives are effectual, when the Holy Spirit discovers the things that are freely given to us of God. He makes us sensible of them, and thankful for them: for he preserves in the soul a blessed poverty of spirit, an humble abiding sense of wants and unworthiness, and thus he lays a sure foundation for thankfulness. Every blessing is then received with a Why me—what am I, and what is my Father's house, that God should deal thus bountifully with me? I must refer it all to the praise of the glory of his own grace: blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed me with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ. All these blessings flow from the Father's love in his Son, and the Holy Spirit has discovered to me that boundless ocean of love, and has often refreshed me with its life-giving streams. He has made known to me the good pleasure of the Father's will, which he had purposed in himself, to choose me by his distinguishing grace to be one of his children, and through faith in Jesus Christ I read my adoption, and take possession of the inheritance of children. Mine experience of these blessings cannot be questioned, while I am receiving out of the fulness of Jesus, grace for grace. O how great is my debt! It is equal to the eternal Three: so should my gratitude be. It is very meet, right, and my bounden duty, that I should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God: therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, I laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts: heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. Amen.

May such as this, O my soul, be thy daily tribute of thanks.

Consider what thou owest to thy God—how great are his favours, how many, how endless—and bestowed on the most unworthy. Review his goodness in giving thee being and in preserving it. Remember from how many dangers and pains he has delivered thee; what health and creature-comforts he has vouchsafed of his mere bounty; and what a monument of his long-suffering thou art. O what a miracle! that one like thee should be out of hell. Then put to the account spiritual favours, what blessings thou hast received from the Father's love in Jesus; what blessings thou art entitled to in him, not only in time, but also in eternity. Cast up the mighty sum, and say how much it is. Canst thou tell the numbers thereof? No. It is beyond the power of the greatest arithmetician. If thou couldst write a figure upon every atom in the creation, thou wouldst want a new world, whereon to sum up the vast account: for thy mercies reach to the heaven of heavens, and they are also everlasting. Then consider to whom thou art thus indebted. Is it not to a justly-offended God, who might have glorified all his perfections in punishing thee for thy sins? Whereas in wonderful grace he has chosen and called thee to the adoption of sons. He is thy Father. This is the spring of all thy mercies. In love he gave his Son to finish thy salvation; and his Spirit has brought thee to believe in it, and to enjoy it. This is the source of all thy praise. The object of thanksgiving is thy covenant God, who is related to thee in such a bond of love as will bring thee under eternal obligations. Thou art therefore in all thy praise, to remember thy relation to Father, Son, and Spirit, thy debt to them for that most blessed relation, thy growing, ever-growing debt. Praise will pay none of it. The saints in glory do but acknowledge it. While they are praising more, the sum is increasing. O my soul, beg of thy God to give thee grace, that thine acknowledgments may be in some measure like theirs. They are crying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, giving glory for the Father's love in Jesus, and for their experience of it by the eternal Spirit. May this subject be thine, more spiritual, more holy every day, till it be what theirs is, perfect and without intermission.

Since it is thy privilege, O my soul, to pray to thy covenant God, and to praise him for covenant mercies, then thou wilt highly prize the Holy Scriptures; because without them thou canst not know what to pray for, nor what is indeed a mercy. Thy faith has nothing to stand upon, but the word of God, and nothing to praise him for, but mercies therein pro-

mised, and by believing received. O how dear then should his word be to thee; how greatly studied, how diligently heard, that by it thou mayest grow in every grace, which is needful for thy holy walk with God. It is the appointed means by which the Holy Spirit acts. It is his great instrument in beginning and carrying on spiritual life. He opens the understanding to know the Scriptures, he inclines the will and the affections to receive them in the love of the truth, and he influences the whole man to submit to live under the obedience of faith. Whatever strength, victory, comfort, or blessing of any kind he bestows, it comes by obeying the truth through the Spirit. So that thou canst not go on in thy walk with God, but by a constant and believing use of the Scriptures. They should be thy study night and day, heard and read carefully, mixed with faith, treasured up in thy memory, received into thy heart, and brought into thy life, and all by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, in order to thine enjoyment of the promised blessings of the Father's love through the Son's salvation. Thus the word will be the means of thy maintaining fellowship with the blessed Trinity. By mixing faith with it, thou wilt be constantly receiving from them covenant mercies: and so thou wilt go forward. Thy steps will be ordered aright according to the word, and thy way will be prosperous.

Consider, then, O my soul, whether thou art making this use of the Scriptures. Dost thou find them the means of thy growth in divine knowledge in faith and love? Do they really promote thy communion with God, and, on that account, are they daily more thy study and thy delight? Never think of hearing or reading them without praying for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that they may be the means of keeping up fellowship with thy Father in Jesus. For this end they were revealed, and if this end be not answered, they profit thee nothing. Make it then thy constant practice, before hearing, to pray for a spiritual appetite, and as new-born babes desire the milk, so thou mayest hunger and thirst for the good word of life—in hearing, beg of God, that thou mayest feed upon the word and digest it, and thine inward man may be nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine—after hearing, pray for a sanctified memory to treasure up for use, what thou hast learnt, that as occasion shall serve, it may be realized, and brought into practice, thy life and conversation being cast *into the* mould of the word. With the same dependence on *the Divine* teacher read, as well as hear, the Scriptures.

Meditate on them: converse about them; expecting to find them able to make these wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, and as thy faith in him increases, able to bring in richer experience of thy Father's love in him.

How sweet is prayer, how delightful is praise, how blessed is hearing and reading the word, when these are the means of meeting and conversing with God! His presence puts the highest honour upon them, and exalts duty into a royal privilege: for he is present as a Father with his children. O what a dignity is it to have God for our father! What a happiness to have free fellowship with him in this dearest relation! In thy daily hearing and reading his word, observe, O my soul, what is spoken of this holy fellowship; and seek to maintain it, and to improve it in every appointed way, particularly in keeping the command of thy dying Friend,

'Do this in remembrance of me!' When his disciples meet together for this purpose, then place the whole dependence of thy heart upon thy crucified Saviour. Considering the infinite and everlasting efficacy of the sacrifice of his body and soul to take away sin, draw near in faith to feast upon it: for his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. Look well to the end of the institution: it was not only to remind thee of, but also to convey to thee, all the blessings of that one offering, which perfects for ever: it was to teach thee, that thy spiritual life, and every grace and comfort of it, are as dependent upon Christ crucified, as the life of thy body is upon the meat and drink of this world. Thy life comes from his death: thy life is nourished by feeding upon Christ thy passover, who was sacrificed for thee: he intended by the bread to point out unto thee his body, and by the wine his blood—by eating and drinking them, thy taking him and living upon him—by thy bodily support received from them, the nourishment of thy soul, by eating his flesh, and drinking his blood. He would have thee to look through the signs to the things signified: thou art not to rest in the outward act, but to rest in the promise of the word of God. Thy faith is not to be exercised about the Lord's supper as a duty; but it is to be exercised upon his word: and what he has therein promised to make it, that thou art to expect in taking it. He appointed it to be the means of communicating with him, and of thy enjoying fellowship with him in his sufferings. It is a spiritual believing act, in which thou art invited to partake of the paschal Lamb: it is the Lord's passover; and will certainly answer every purpose, for which he instituted it: he appointed it to be the

means of safety from the destroyer, of deliverance from bondage, of free and full forgiveness of all sins, of a happy passage through the Red sea, and of the everlasting possession of the promised inheritance: for these gracious purposes the Father's love gave his Son to be a lamb slain, and then a lamb feasted on: and the Holy Spirit makes it a feast indeed. It is to the believing receiver spiritually whatever the passover was to the Jews on their coming out of Egypt. It is a communion with the blessed Trinity—with the Father for providing such a banquet of love—with the Son for giving himself to be a lamb slain, and to be a spiritual repast to his people in earth and in heaven—with the Holy Spirit for rendering the bread which is broken the communion of the body of Christ, and the cup of blessing, the communion of the blood of Christ. Communion signifies union with—the believer united to Christ—one with Christ—a member of his body, lives in him, and on him, has communications of life, nourishment, strength, comfort, &c. as the members have from their union with the head. He has a real inward fellowship with Jesus, in his cross and passion, in his resurrection and ascension, in his intercession, and sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He communicates now with Jesus in all the blessings of his Father's love, and will communicate with him in all his Father's glory. O what a privilege is the Lord's supper, when it is thus the means of communion with the Son, and with his Father through the Spirit! What an honour is it to be admitted to a feast instituted by the Lamb of God, and for the enjoyment of the love of God! What a blessing is it to sit down now to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and to partake by faith of its spiritual realities and delights! There is nothing beyond this upon earth, and it has sometimes been to the believing receiver, a foretaste of heaven. Yes, blessed be God, it has been, even to thee, O my soul, unworthy as thou art of one crumb from the Master's table, a feast of fat things, full of marrow, of wines kept and well refined. And when thou hast not been so highly feasted, yet thou hast enjoyed solid communion. Partaking of the bread and wine according to the Lord's institution, and depending on the Lord's promise, thou hast been fed and nourished at his table. The virtue of the Spirit has been put forth in thy heart, and thou hast as truly by faith, eat the flesh, and drank the blood of the Son of man, as thou didst eat the bread and drink the wine. It was, *strictly speaking*, a communion; being united to Christ thou *wast a partaker* of Christ, and hadst fellowship with him in his

life and death. O pray for more of this. Beg of the Holy Spirit to increase thy communion with Jesus, that thou mayest live more in him and on him, and thereby enjoy more of the love of thy heavenly Father. Plead his promise, and expect the fulfilling of it: 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.' John vi. 56, 57.

Viewing the duties of the first table in this light, how exalted are they, and spiritual! What a glory does it put upon them, that the believer has fellowship with the eternal Three, and in prayer and praise, in hearing and reading the word, and at the Lord's supper, he enjoys their covenant mercies, partaking of them now as really by faith, as ever he will by sense in heaven! The law written and engraven in stones was glorious, but the law thus written upon his heart excelleth in glory. The two first tables of stone were broken, the other two are lost: but no time shall deface the writing of the Holy Spirit. The new heart turned in love to God, shall keep his impression for ever. He then should rest securely upon this: because he has undertaken to abide for ever with his own people, that the purposes of the Father's love, and the blessings of the Son's salvation, may be always enjoyed by them. In remembrance of this great truth they keep the *Lord's day*. They rest on it from labour, declaring thereby their belief of the rest, which the eternal Three have provided in Jesus—a rest in their souls—given without their labour and pains—secured to them by covenant—kept for them by almighty power—a sabbath remaining for the people of God, into which they shall as certainly enter, as Jesus their forerunner has entered. Sabbath signifies a day of rest; it was set apart in memory of God's finishing the works of the first creation; and is observed now in memory of his finishing the works of the new creation. The end for which the world was made will be answered soon; and then it, and all the works therein, shall be burnt up, and the place of them found no more: but the glorious work of the God-man shall endure for ever. In honour of this greatest work of God we keep the Lord's day. It is his sabbath—a day eternally famous for his finishing the work of salvation and entering into his rest. 'And we who have believed (says the apostle) do enter into rest.' We do enter into it now by faith, and we share with him in his sabbath. The atonement which he made, the *righteousness which* he wrought out, the victory which he

obtained, the works which he perfected for ever, and the glory which he now inherits, we enjoy at present by believing, and enter upon the possession of them. According to our faith, such is our rest. He that believes without wavering in the finished salvation of Jesus, he will have the peace of God ruling in his conscience, he will experience the perfect love of God to him, which will make him rest in his love to God, and then he will delight himself in the ways of God. This is the Christian sabbath. It consists in a resting upon Jesus, and in depending upon his having finished the works of redemption, and then in living upon them for our souls, as much as we do upon the works of creation for our bodies.

Sweet is the day of rest, spent in this holy employment. Happy time! set apart for spiritual intercourse with God, and consecrated for keeping up fellowship with him in his fatherly love in Jesus, and for receiving from him communications of his graces and blessings. Thrice happy day! in which this fellowship is kept up, and these graces and blessings are enjoyed. By this heavenly converse the inner man is renewed with growing strength: his faculties are enlarged; and their happiness is increased. By which means he comes nearer to the spiritual rest of the heavenly sabbath. He calls it his delight, holy of the Lord, honourable: because the end of its institution is answered to him, and he has on it happy communion with his God. When he draws near to God in his appointed ways, he finds God in them, and experiences his loving-kindness, which is better than life itself. Blessed is the man, who is thus highly favoured. He enters within the veil into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and finds a most loving Father upon a throne of grace. In every service on the Lord's day, he seeks a more intimate acquaintance and more spiritual fellowship with him. His very heart is engaged in this work. His soul thirsteth, and his very flesh longeth to meet God, as he has met him in the sanctuary. Therein he has found communications of grace, which have rendered the ordinances delightful indeed. He rejoices in hopes of meeting God, and of drawing near to him in prayer, of praising him still more and more for his abundant mercies, of hearing the reviving sound of gospel grace, and of everlasting love, and of receiving it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God, and of sitting down to the banquet of heaven in communion with Christ crucified, through him partaking of the Father's love by the Spirit's influence. *Blessed is he* of the Lord, who is thus spiritual in sabbath

duties. By keeping up constant communion with God in them his blessedness is increasing. He is already in possession of the same things, which his elder brethren are enjoying in heaven: and he will become more heavenly-minded, while he maintains daily fellowship with the eternal Three in their covenant offices and blessings.

Consider, O my soul, that these privileges are thine. Look well to thine improvement of them. Remember, thou art already, by believing, entered into rest. Thy sabbath is begun—a day, whose sun shall never set—whose glory shall shine brighter for evermore. May thine enjoyment of this rest, which is so glorious, be growing, until thou attain to the eternal sabbath. O pray thy Lord to lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, to vouchsafe thee more of the love of his heart, and more of the bounty of his hand, more communion with him, and more communications from him, that thou mayest be growing up into Jesus in all things, and be ready, whenever he calls thee, to enter in with him into his perfect rest.

Thus the first table duties are kept. By the teaching of the Spirit, they become gospel privileges. When he makes us new creatures in Christ Jesus, then we take the Three in Jehovah to be our God. We know our Father in Christ, believe in him, and love him. We will have no other gods but him. We give his honour to none, his name to none, our time and heart-service to none, but him. His love made known to us, engages our affections, and puts us upon seeking fellowship with him in all appointed ways. Yea, the more we know of his perfect love to us, the more we are disposed to love him, and to witness it in every thing we do. It becomes our study to walk before him in all well-pleasing: for we find it our happiness. Whether we eat or drink, rise up, or lie down to rest, follow our worldly calling, or have any dealings with men, we endeavour to do all in faith. This makes the common things of life, spiritual actions: because in them we maintain intercourse with God. This is, indeed, the heavenly temper of the children of the Most High. They seek the presence and the blessings of their Father in Jesus in all they do. They are taught to live in a simple dependence upon him. They acknowledge this dependence by looking up to him for every thing needful, and, having received it, by giving him all his glory. Then they are returned in heart and life to that God, from whom they are departed by unbelief.

Most blessed return! For now the old sinful nature with

its affections and lusts is pardoned, and thereby they have lost their dominion. They have no right to exercise their tyranny any longer. The base selfish tempers, which rendered a man a plague to others, and often a burden to himself, are dethroned. The pardoning them in subduing them: these always go together. They keep the understanding in darkness, but now it is light in the Lord. They blinded the conscience, and made it insensible, but now it has seen its guilt, and has found peace with God. The heart was engaged in their service, but now God has set up his throne in it, and sweetly rules over the affections. Thus a free pardon brings a man into liberty. He ceaseth to be a slave to his selfish tempers. A full pardon brings him full victory over them: for then he has the blood of Jesus to cleanse him from all sin, and the Spirit of Jesus to subdue all sin. He is taken into the protection of Christ, and is his free man. None shall make him a slave. The Spirit of Christ rules in him, and makes him willing to live under the reign of grace: he dwells and abides with him to preserve in his heart the love of God, and to produce in it the proper fruits of that love towards men. Thus he brings the sinner to love the

Duties of the second table, which our Lord has summed up in one sentence—'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' This love was lost at the fall. Nothing is in mankind, by nature, but selfishness. He is a slave to divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. Every age has felt this malady, and complained of it: but no human means have been able to remedy it. Fine systems of ethics, and beautiful plans of natural religion have been tried; the aid of strong reasoning, assisted with the forces of logic and metaphysics, has been called in; but all in vain. Selfish tempers broke through their cobweb-arguments, and sported with their imaginary bonds. Sometimes they polished the outside a little, and made a man a courtier: he looked and smiled, and seemed to love; but they did not reach his heart. This is the prerogative of the Lord God. He only, who made us creatures, can make us new creatures. And until we are new-born of God, we have every thing in us opposite to brotherly love. But when we are born of the Spirit, then we are taught of him to love one another. He teaches it, and he enforces it. His lessons are entirely practical. He not only informs the understanding, but also influences the affections. Having disposed and enabled the heart to love *God, he* evidences the power of his divine love by its genuine

fruits towards men. These are inseparable from their cause. Divine love is never without brotherly love: for so far as the love of God is felt, it produces loving tempers. It opens and enlarges the heart, as the warm beams of the sun open and expand the flowers. The agency, which performs this, is almighty. The Holy Spirit, having begotten the new nature, writes upon it the law of love. He keeps it willing to resist, and makes it able to overcome, the selfish tempers of the old man. The apostle Peter has given us a delightful description of the manner of the Divine proceeding herein, 1. Pet. i. 21. —23. 'Christ was manifest in those last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God: seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.' The Christians to whom he writes were partakers of the new birth, they were born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible. The Holy Spirit was the author of their regeneration. The word of truth was the means which he made use of—they obeyed the truth through the Spirit. By believing it they were begotten again to a lively faith and hope in God. They evidenced their love to him by their unfeigned love of the brethren: they loved him that begat, and loved those also that were begotten of him. From whence it appears, that the love of the brethren, is not in the heart by nature, but is from the grace of the Holy Spirit. He gives a new heart, and he sheds abroad in it the love of God, which by his influence works mightily in opposing and overcoming our selfish tempers, and in establishing the practice of second table duties. These spring from divine love. The Holy Spirit joins them together, as the cause and the effect. He teaches no man to love God without teaching him also to love the brethren. He rains and shines upon the tree of love; under his cultivation it thrives: he brings forth the sweet and loving tempers of the new man, and they bear fruit abundantly. And blessed fruit it is, for God has great glory from it, and men much good. Love thinketh, speaketh, and doeth no evil. Yea, it cannot be in the heart, without a desire to do good to all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith—to do good to their bodies and souls—to give honour to whom honour is due—to preserve their lives, their property, their chastity, their

good name—to bear no false witness, but always to speak the truth of them—and to covet none of their blessings, either spiritual or temporal. This is morality—Christian morality—for it is learnt no where but in the school of Christ. What his Spirit teaches, he enables also to perform, which moral persuasion cannot. He gives a will and a power to put off the selfish tempers of the old man, and to put on the loving graces of the new man: these graces he preserves by his almighty agency, and calls them into daily practice, through faith working by love—love to God from a sense of his infinite goodness—and love to man for God's sake. Thus the second table duties, when done out of gratitude to God for his infinite mercies, help the believer on his walk heavenwards, and are the means of maintaining constant fellowship with his God.

Is this, O my soul, thy happy experience? Examine carefully. What are thy tempers? What is thy practice, with respect to loving thy neighbour as thyself? There is great complaint in the world of the want of brotherly love: and no wonder. It cannot be in them who are wholly lovers of themselves. But may not the same complaint be taken up of the household and family of faith? are not the children of the same father deficient in brotherly love? Yes, they are. Too, too often they live below their privilege, and thereby bring great dishonour upon God, and give great offence to men. Be humbled, O my soul, for thine own failing. Remember, what reason thou hast to mourn for the infirmities of thy love—how barren it is in its proper fruits—how cold, when it should be fervent—how polluted, when it should be pure—how covetous, when it should be liberal. Hast thou duly attended to the cause of this, and does it grieve thee to thy heart? Wouldst thou be saved from self-love, and increase in brotherly love, yet more and more? Since this is thy case, meditate carefully upon what is promised, and pray earnestly for what is provided for the subduing of those tempers which are enemies to brotherly love, and which, if not subdued, will hinder thee from enjoying the love of God in thy walk with him.

First, Consider thy state. Thou art a pardoned sinner, not under the law, but under grace—freely, fully saved from the guilt of all thy sins. There is none to condemn, God having justified thee. He sees thee in his Son, washes thee in his blood, clothes thee in his righteousness, and he embraces him and thee, the Head and the members, with the same affection.

Secondly, Consider what is promised to them who are in Christ. *Sin* shall not have dominion over them. Pardoned

sin shall not reign. It cannot, for it is dethroned. Thou art therefore free from this bondage. Stand fast in this liberty. Now the condemning power of sin is taken out of thy conscience, make use of the grace provided in Jesus to deliver thine heart from the love of it, and thy conversation from the slavish service of it. And remember, this grace is almighty. Trust in it, and thou shalt be saved from the tyranny of every sin. Therefore,

Thirdly, Read the great charter of grace, and mark to what glorious privileges thou art entitled. Being saved from the guilt of all sin, and having a promise of being saved from the dominion of all sin, as the Lord's free man thou art by faith to claim thy birthright, and to enjoy it. Since Christ has given thee liberty, to whom shouldst thou be a slave? Put off therefore the old man with his lusts and deeds: serve him no longer: it is a blessed part of redemption to be saved from his service. God be thanked, that he may be put off, as a garment which you have done with, and will be put on no more. Away with it, it is filthy and abominable altogether. Yea, worse still, the plague is in it. Death and hell are in it: for the old man, sinful nature, thus to be put off, is a body of sin, and selfish tempers are his members, such as anger, wrath, malice, lies, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. These must be put off, or they will be always plotting and acting against brotherly love. Therefore the new man, renewed in the spirit of his mind, opposes them, and is mighty through God to mortify them. By the same power he puts on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forgiveness of injuries, even as Christ forgave him, so he forgives; and unto all these graces he puts on love, which is the complete binding of them together. What an amiable character is here of the new man! He is created anew in Christ Jesus, that he may exercise every kind and benevolent temper to the brethren. He is renewed in his heart to the unfeigned love of them; and is enabled to manifest it by every work and labour of love. And lest the vile tempers of the old man, still in being, although dethroned, should get dominion again, he is strengthened mightily by the Spirit in the inner man to crucify them day by day. Since this is hard work, consisting of continual and severe self-denial, no less than in cutting off right-hand, and in plucking out right-eye, lusts: for thine encouragement to persevere, consider,

Fourthly, That thou art *in* Christ—a member in his body —and in him thou hast perfect and eternal redemption from the old man of sin with his affections and lusts. The more this is believed, the more will the fruits of it appear. Faith in the absolute and everlasting victory of the glorified Head will animate thee as one of his members to resist thy vanquished foes, knowing thou art a partaker of his victory, and in his strength, and to his glory, thou art fighting against them. In him thou hast already conquered: in him thou shalt be more than a conqueror. Reckon thyself therefore to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God *in* Jesus Christ thy Lord. And depend on him for the power of his death, that he may put it forth in thee, and mortify sin, and for the power of his resurrection, to quicken thee to newness of life. Thy communion with him in his death and resurrection will be in proportion to thy faith. If thou believest steadfastly, that thou art one with him, thou wilt find the effect of it in steadfast communion. Cleave then to him, as a branch in the vine. Planted together in the likeness of his death, thou wilt find virtue coming from him to crucify thy selfish tempers. Planted together in the likeness of his resurrection, thou wilt find virtue coming from him to keep thee alive to God. To this fellowship with Jesus thou art crucified. Thou hast a right to communicate with him in his life and death. And whilst thou art enjoying it by the faith of the Son of God, sin shall have no more dominion over thee, than it has over him. This being thy glorious birthright, O my soul, put honour upon it. Enjoy it in the peace of thy conscience, and in the love of thy heart. Read thy perfect redemption in Jesus from every thing opposite to brotherly love, and improve this thy experience. As there is sufficient grace promised and provided for thee, see thou make use of it, and manifest it openly in thy tempers and in thy walk! For consider,

Fifthly, Thy God and Father calls upon thee to give glory to him for his love to thee by exercising love toward the brethren: and thou art bound to this by a thousand ties. Has he loved thee freely, dost thou know it, and is the grateful sense of it upon thy heart? How then can it be hid? It cannot; it will manifest itself as light does. The Father has chosen thee in his Son, that he might communicate to thee of his goodness, and he has made thee a child of light, that thou mightest reflect the rays of his goodness upon others. Thou *art to shew* forth the praises of him that hath called thee out

of darkness into his marvellous light. He hath called thee out of the deadness and blindness of thy natural state, and hath enlightened thee with the light of life. How marvellous, that it should ever shine upon thee! Marvellous indeed, that thou shouldst shine as a light in the world! Admire this grace. Let others admire it with thee, by seeing the reality, and by feeling the comfort of it. And as the sun not only enlightens, but also enlivens, with his fruitful rays the face of the earth, and cheers every creature upon it; so let thy light shine before men. Give them clear proof of thy love to God by thy love to them: let them feel the blessed fruits of it, that they may see thy good works, and glorify thy Father who is in heaven. Love in thy heart will shew itself. It will communicate its gracious rays, and the Father of lights will have the praise. This should be thine end, as it is his. He aims at his own glory in all his mercies: his aim should be thine also. Thy Father calls upon thee to do good to others, that he may be glorified thereby. O what a high calling is thine! What an honour does God put upon thee. Thou art to bring him glory from men—from his own children: for their bowels are to be refreshed by thee—and from others, that whereas they would speak against thee as an evildoer, they may by thy good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Aim at this. Look at no motive to do good to men below the glory of God. And remember, thy doing it may be the means of his visiting them, as he visited thee, with his great salvation. O blessed fruit of brotherly love; may it be the happy effect of thy light shining before men. May God be daily honoured by it, and the comfort, and if it please him, the salvation, of his people be thereby promoted. Yea, Lord, this is my prayer. My heart says, Amen.

If thou findest it very difficult to live in the constant practice of brotherly love, meditate, O my soul, upon the gospel motives for an increase of faith, and seek for the promised assistance to enable thee to love others as God hath loved thee. Above all, expect the effectual teaching of the Holy Ghost. He only can write this delightful law upon the heart—the fair impression of it is kept by his power, and the exercise of it in thy tempers and walk is the work of his grace. O pray then for a constant supply of the Spirit, that in all thy dealings with mankind it may appear thou hast been with Jesus. Set his most amiable life before their eyes. Give them reason to honour his beneficence, from thy copying

it legibly after him. Let his love to thee be glorified from thy labour of love to them. Study to shew forth his praises, and go about doing good as he did. And hereby convince the world, that Jesus Christ was the greatest moralist, and that his disciples came the nearest to the perfect pattern of their Master; as a poet of our own observes—

> Talk thee of *morals*? O thou bleeding love!
> Thou maker of new morals to mankind!
> The grand morality is love of thee.

The love of Jesus teaches and enforces the love of the brethren. The Spirit of Jesus writes it upon the heart, and makes it practical in the life. And thus the two tables are joined together: and love to him that begat, produces love to them that are begotten of him. When the happy believer is walking in this love to his Father, and to his family, then he will live in the observance of the duties, which relate to himself: for he was taught them, when he returned in his heart to God. And every step he walks with God is in the presence of them.

The first temptation was an offer of independence—'Ye shall be as gods'—man was drawn away by it, and fell from his high estate. Still this mother sin is fruitful in fallen man. In great mercy there is a pardon provided, and in the way of receiving the pardon, there is a remedy for it. The infinite wisdom of God so contrived the way of our recovery, that without Christ we can do nothing. His salvation undertaken and finished for us, his salvation applied to us, the blessings of his salvation enjoyed by us in time, and in eternity, are the free gifts of his free grace. He is the author. He is the finisher. He carries it on from first to last. All our sufficiency is of him. We cannot without him so much as think a good thought. Therefore his redeemed people are brought off from all trust in any other object, and are taught to place their whole dependence for salvation, and for every thing that accompanies it, upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

To this end the Holy Spirit, the great convincer of sin, had made them acquainted with themselves. He had awakened them to a right knowledge of their state, of which they had not been sensible before; and they found that they were fallen and apostate creatures. He shewed them sin in its exceeding sinfulness, and they tasted some of the bitter fruits of it: they felt in what a dreadful condition their departure from God had left them—so ignorant that they could not by any human means attain to the least saving knowledge of God—so guilty, *that let them* do all they could, still the condemning sentence

of the law stood out against them—so unholy, that soul and body were sold under sin, and ready to every unholy word and work—so utterly helpless, that it was impossible they should of themselves attain true happiness, or escape deserved misery. The Holy Spirit taught them these lessons practically. His conviction carried demonstration with it. He not only made them feel their guilt and their danger; but he also opened a way for pardon and safety. He led them to Jesus, and in him they found every thing needful for their salvation—treasured up for them by the free covenant love of the Father—secured to them by the fulfilling of all covenant conditions in the life and death of the God-man—and received by the faith of the operations of the Holy Ghost: by whom they were made new creatures in Christ Jesus—members under him, their head—united as intimately as the branches are to the vine—and living by and in and on him, every moment, and for every thing. Thus the glorifier of Jesus teaches all his members to depend upon the fulness of their Head, and he abides with them in order to keep them in this dependence. He testifies to them of Jesus—'He is your whole salvation, your all in all; you have not, you never will have, any thing to glory in, but in the Lord—whatever good you receive comes from his grace—whatever evil you escape, is from his blessing—and if ever you have eternal life, it will be the free gift of God in Christ Jesus. Your bodies also are dependent on him, as well as your souls: personal, family, national mercies are his royal favours, and bestowed out of his sovereign bounty.' Thus he teaches believers. He humbles them, that they may exalt the Saviour. He makes them poor in spirit, that they may live upon his riches. He keeps them sensible of their own emptiness, that they may be making constant use of the Saviour's fulness, and living in an absolute dependence upon him for every thing. While they live thus by the faith of the Son of God, every high thought is brought into subjection to him. Pride is daily mortified. Self-complacency is abhorred. Self-admiration is abominable. Humility is become their clothing, and they cannot put it off; because every moment they are making use of it. Sins, wants, miseries, temptations, &c. are continually reminding them of their vileness, and of God's goodness. And this truth, enforced by the Holy Spirit, makes them willing to learn of Jesus to be meek and lowly. They become teachable scholars, and sit very low at his feet, where they attain to true humility of heart. And this influences their *whole behaviour*. In a deep and abiding sense of

their entire sinfulness and helplessness, they loathe themselves before God, and walk humble before men. They feel they are of themselves nothing but sin, and if left to themselves can be nothing but misery; therefore they put their whole trust and confidence in a covenant God, and his free grace has from them all its glory.

What is thy knowledge, O my soul, and what is thine experience of this Christian poverty of spirit? Art thou acquainted with it in the ground of thine heart, and is it in thy daily practice? Examine thyself, and with diligence: for it is a most blessed grace, advanced to high honour in the court of Jesus. To it he has made many exceeding great and precious promises. O pray to him for this royal gift. Wait on thy Divine prophet, and hear his lessons. He teaches as man cannot. He recommends, he gives, the grace of humility. He makes his scholars truly humble in heart. Observe his abasing doctrine, and may all within thee bow to the power of it.

Observe, how he humbles the sinner. He convinces him of his sinful state, of the corruption of his whole nature, and of the depravity of every faculty of soul and body. The sinner is made to feel it, and to live under the sense of it. And in order to fasten the conviction, clearer discoveries are daily made of this corruption: for it is a mystery of iniquity. There is no tracing to the bottom its deep-laid devices and never-ceasing workings. 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?' There is not a man upon earth who knows all that may be known of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of his own sinfulness. When the Lord, who searcheth the heart, has laid open some of its infinite evil, he continues to discover more. Every day brings to light strange workings of corruption. The convinced sinner has deeper views of his helplessness, and of his unworthiness. And, after many vain legal trials, he at last finds it impossible for him to do any thing, for which God should pardon and save him. Thus he is laid low with his mouth in the dust. Behold, I am vile, filthy, and abominable altogether: I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

These are the humbling lessons which the Holy Spirit teaches. He convinces the sinner, that there is neither help nor hope in himself, and so leaves him nothing to trust in, but the salvation provided in Jesus by covenant love, and given *freely by grace*. And the manner of receiving this salvation *is such* as cuts off all occasion of boasting: for faith is the

only means appointed of God,—and faith is his gift—not bestowed upon the worthy, but upon the ungodly,—not for any merit in them, or for any terms or conditions which they have performed, or ever will perform, but by an act of absolute sovereignty, to the praise of the glory of his own grace. He will have mercy because he will have mercy. O humbling consideration! How low does it bring the sinner! How must his proud heart be abased, while he feels himself a debtor for every thing good to the mere will and pleasure of God? And so long as he enjoys those good things, he is kept poor in spirit, because he has none of them to himself. They are laid up in the fulness of Jesus, are to be had from thence only by faith, and are received as the sense of his wants leads the believer to make use of them. Living by faith is the death of self-importance. Then the loftiness of man is bowed down, the haughtiness of man is made low, and the Lord alone is exalted.

Observe, O my soul, what an honour God has put upon this grace. 'Before honour is humility.' Whom God honours he humbles first. He giveth grace to the humble: because the humble give him all his glory. The highest throne which he has upon earth is in the humblest heart. To it he vouchsafes his constant presence, and makes the greatest communications of his love: 'For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' O what an honour is here promised to the humble! The greatest they can have on this side of heaven. God will dwell with them; and what a blessing! and his temple shall be in the humble heart. The High and Holy One passes by what is in highest esteem among men. He stains the pride of human greatness and goodness. He does not vouchsafe to set up his throne with the princes, nor to give his honour to the learned of the world. But he puts honour upon the contrite and humble. He condescends to visit them; yea, he delights to dwell with them, and in them—the highest above all heavens in the lowest hearts. There he communicates his choicest love and richest favours. O my God! bestow upon me this grace, which in thy sight is so precious. Humble me, that I may be revived with thy presence, and refreshed daily with thy love. Give me more humility, and fit me for nearer fellowship with thee. Bring down every high thought, *and let me find* it true, that God resisteth the proud, *but giveth more grace* unto the humble.

Thus the true poverty of spirit is needful, not only to bring the sinner to Christ, but also to preserve the believer in communion with him: for so long as he walks by faith, every thing will tend to promote this communion. In the daily sense of his wants, he will go to his bountiful Saviour for a supply. In the feeling of his misery, he will depend on his loving Saviour for relief: whereby he will be led to more intercourse with him. What he finds wrong in himself, will bring him to live more by faith, and as faith increases, so will his delight in God. He will grow more sensible of his weakness, and that will make him stronger in the Lord. He will know more of his own heart, which will humble him and keep him dependent on the grace of Jesus. He will see reason not to lean to his own understanding, but ever to pray, Lord, guide me by thy good Spirit. Viewing spots and blemishes in his best doings, his triumph will be, 'I will make mention of thy righteousness, Lord Jesus, even of thine *only*.' Thus every thing will humble him, and lead him to live more by faith; by which means he will get faster hold of Jesus, live in nearer fellowship, and be receiving out of his fulness grace for grace—two graces at once—the blessing needed—and thankfulness for it. Hereby a sweet intercourse will be kept open. To the humble, God delights to give grace, and they delight to return him his glory. The more he gives, the more glory would they gladly return. And he does give more, and he receives it back again in thanks and praise. Blessed grace! by which this holy fellowship is maintained. Happy humility! by which the heart, being emptied of self, is made capable of receiving the fulness which is of God. Then is the promise fulfilled—'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'—it is theirs now—not only in title, but also in possession, for the kingdom of God is within them; and they are partakers at present of its blessings and glories, as truly, though not so perfectly, as they will be in heaven. Meditate, O my soul! upon this Divine grace. Thou seest the necessity of it. O pray earnestly for it, and for more of it. The great idol *self* must be dethroned, where God reigns. Thou canst not walk with him, unless thou art humble in heart. And if thou hast been walking with him, thou wilt be taught to stop, whenever thou beginnest to look at self with admiration. O beg of the Lord then to give thee the true gospel poverty of spirit. It is to be in constant practice, and used for every thing: for thou seest how it *keeps up* fellowship with God, who makes the greatest communications of himself to the humblest. And the reason is

because they return him all his glory. If therefore, wouldst have much grace in exercise, pray for much hu-
. O my God, whatever thou givest, give humility with t I may not seek self in it, but thine honour, nor lay it pon myself, but to thy glory. Meek and lowly Jesus, me like thyself: keep me learning of thee, till I am per- like thee. I would come always poor to thee, to receive r riches, and to receive with them an humble heart to thee for them. O let thy glory be mine end and aim. ıe and mine be thine—I humbled—thou exalted. Let aces and gifts bring thee in a constant revenue of praise. nay thine increasing goodness be joined with a constant se of humility, that my heart and all within me may and praise thy holy name, to day and for ever. Amen.

this appear in my whole behaviour to others. This is ər blessed fruit of humility. It has an influence over liever's intercourse with mankind, and renders his tem- nd manners loving and amiable. Pride was not made an, and yet it is in all men, and is the chief parent of n woe. It sets people above their place, and makes them that they could support the greatest fortunes, and are o manage the most difficult affairs. Others, as proud as deny them the fancied superiority. Hence come wars ghtings, public and private. The sweet grace of humility t from heaven to relieve those distresses: for into what- osom it enters, it renders men kind to one another, ten- arted, ready to every good word and work. Thus runs vine exhortation: 'Be ye kindly affectioned one to ano- with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another.' is heart-humility, which the Holy Spirit requires, hich he bestows. He brings his disciples into humble tion to God, and then to one another: which has the happy effect upon public, social, and private happiness. would these flourish, if all men were of a meek and spirit! But there is none of this among the unconverted; las! how little is there among believers! How often are ound in the proud spirit of the world! acting contrary to wly spirit of Jesus. And yet it is not for want of precept, r want of promised help: but it is because they are not ng by faith, as becometh the gospel, nor out of love to glory studying to recommend humility by their prac- Observe, O my soul, the remedy provided of God for *bduing of all selfish* tempers, and pray that it may be

effectual in thy life and conversation. Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But God giveth more grace, wherefore he saith, 'God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.' This scripture cannot speak in vain: for fallen man is certainly such as he is here described. The spirit that dwelleth in him, in his own nature, lusteth to envy—a passion made up of pride and discontent—offended with God—and displeased with the blessings which he bestows upon men. It is an enemy to the love both of God and man, and transgresses the law of both tables. Pride brought it into heaven, and the fallen angels brought it into this world. Ever since it entered by sin, natural corruption breaks out very much in envy. But God giveth more grace, to conquer this passion, than sinful nature has to put it forth. He not only gives grace to pardon it, but also more grace to subdue it: so that envy loses its dominion in the reign of grace. We cannot subdue, any more than we can pardon, envy, pride, and such passions, but grace is almighty. Want ever so much, use ever so much, God has still more for you. And he gives more, when the creature is humbled enough to take it out of the hands of his mercy. Thus he overcomes envy: 'For he resisteth the proud,' he is at open war with them, and they with him. Pride lifts up the creature against the Creator, and puts it upon seeking happiness out of God: this is resisting his sovereignty, attacking his providence, and opposing his law. He is concerned to pull such rebels down, and he says their pride goeth before destruction: 'But he giveth grace unto the humble'—he gives them grace to humble them, and, being emptied, he delights to fill them: for then they are disposed to receive his grace, and to value it. Whatever God gives, the humble give it back again to him. They have the blessing, he has the praise: which is the just tribute due to him for his gifts. And he gives more grace where he can get more glory. Thus he subdues self-conceit with its various proud workings. And as grace reigns over them, humility prevails; which has a friendly aspect towards mankind. It keeps brotherly love in the heart, and tends mightily to the practice of every social virtue. Humility suffereth long and is kind; humility vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil.

Consider, O my soul, those motives to a holy walk. Put *them all together*. Weigh them carefully again and again. *Do it faithfully*, as in the presence of God. And then try

whether thou art walking in the way of duty with a free spirit? Dost thou proceed upon evangelical or upon legal principles? Dost thou serve God for wages or for love? Examine thy heart. God looks chiefly at it. How is it in duty? Is thine obedience to justify thee in the least, or does it spring from a sense of thy being justified freely and fully? Art thou going about to establish thine own righteousness, or dost thou submit to the righteousness of God? Art thou working from life, or for life? I require thee to examine diligently, by the light of the word, and by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, what thy motives are; for there is no acceptable obedience, but what is done in faith: whatsoever is not of faith is sin. If thou art acting aright, the love of Christ is constraining thee to obedience. Thou art living under the influence of free grace. Thy conscience is at peace with God. Thou hast sweet liberty to serve him without fear. Thy heart delights in his service, and love makes his ways the joy of thy soul. Thou knowest what Jacob felt, when he served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her. A gospel-spirit does the same to God—love makes long service short, and hard service easy. Nothing is pain which love does. And this is gospel-obedience. It is faith working by love, which refines duty into a grace: the commandments are exalted into privileges; the ordinances become happy means of fellowship with God. The believer meets God in them, and by free converse he exercises and improves his love. He draws near to God, and God draws near to him in prayer, in praise, in hearing the word, at the Lord's supper, and in all sabbath duties. In these ways God manifests his gracious presence, and the believer rejoices in it. God communicates his graces, and the believer receives them with thankfulness. O my soul, pray before duty for much of this communion with God in it. Seek it as the one great end of all duty. And if thou findest it, bless and praise the goodness of thy God. But still seek to be more spiritual and evangelical, that the fruits of thy fellowship with God may appear in thy practice of the duties of the second table. Love to God will manifest itself by love to men: for the Holy Spirit teaches all his disciples to love one another, and he teaches effectually. He not only makes them understand what brotherly love is, but he also gives it. They become partakers of the grace, and are enabled to practise it. Thus he recommends and enforces his lessons. He renders his scholars kind to one another, and tender-hearted. He puts forth his mighty power, and subdues

the vile selfish tempers of the old man, and brings into use the benevolent tempers of the new man. While he carries on the gracious work, his disciples grow more acquainted with themselves, and learn heart-humility. He makes them feel their fallen state, their sinfulness, and their danger; in the sense of their guilt, and of their distance from God, they are willing to receive Christ for their whole salvation, and then to enjoy in him all the blessings of the Father's love in earth and heaven.

If thou findest it difficult, O my soul, to walk according to this rule: if to obey from love to God—to love men for God's sake—and in the sense of thine own vileness to be humbled to the dust—if these be hard lessons, consider what makes them so. Where is the difficulty? Is it not in thyself? And is it not chiefly in thy not using and not bringing into practice the principles advanced in the former chapters? Duty must be hard, if the spring of obedience be not in motion; but if this act freely, then all will go on well.

Thy whole conduct through life depends upon the nature of the salvation of which thou art a partaker by grace: consider it attentively. The growing knowledge of it will engage thine affections to a willing obedience. Is it not a complete salvation—an absolutely perfect work—yea, the greatest work of God? because all the rest come from it, and lead to it. Is it not the infinitely wise contrivance of the eternal Three, for which everlasting glory is to be given to every Divine attribute? When every other work of God shall cease, for this all heaven will to eternity be ascribing honour, and blessing, and praise, to Father, Son, and Spirit. Attend, O my soul! to the Scripture-account of this salvation. Review the glory of it. Read again and again the revealed descriptions of it, till thy heart be satisfied, that this salvation is as perfect and complete, as the Lord God Almighty could make it. This is its character. Hast thou studied it well, and art thou well-grounded and established in the belief of it? Mind; this is the foundation. If this totter, so will all the superstructure. O pray then, and be earnest in prayer, that God would enlarge thy views of the infinitely-glorious and everlastingly-perfect salvation, which is in Christ Jesus.

As thou growest more acquainted with it, thou wilt see less reason to be discouraged at the experience of what thou art in thyself. It is a salvation for sinners—such as thou art—and and no way differing from thee. Only when they are called *to the know*ledge of the truth, they are acquainted with *their fallen state*, are made sensible of their helplessness and of

eir misery, but are made willing to cast their souls, at God's mmand, upon the Lord Jesus, trusting to the peace which made by the blood of the cross. And art thou not in the ppy number of these redeemed sinners? Dost not thou be- ve the record which God hath given of his Son, and look on it as thy lawful warrant—to make use of what is laid in the fulness of Jesus,—thine to take freely—thine to use lly—the more the better—thine for receiving, without any ndition or any qualification? He loves to give, and without oney or money's worth. He thinks himself honoured by e pensioners of his grace, who bring nothing to recommend emselves but their sins and miseries, and yet trust in his pro- ised relief. Herein he glories. When they come to him lieving, he bestows his royal gifts upon every one of them: d so far as they believe, he withholds nothing that is need- l for their holy walk in the way of duty.

These are the principles which thou art to bring into prac- e. Carry them, O my soul, into every act of obedience. Go prayer and every duty with this faith, that thou art in Christ, d in him a partaker of his finished salvation: then the ather's love to thee will be manifest, and thou wilt have reet fellowship with him in all thine approaches to the rone—whatever thou undertakest, forget not this leading ath. If thou lose sight of it, thou wilt get into darkness: if ou art not influenced by it, thou wilt be brought into bondage. pon this absolutely-perfect salvation thou art to live by faith on earth, and thou wilt have nothing else to live upon by sense heaven. Trusting to the complete work of Jesus, thou art walk with thy God in time, as thou wilt follow the Lamb eternity, receiving all out of his fulness. O view him in is light, and it will have the happiest effects upon thy daily alk. While thou art receiving from him grace for grace, ou wilt live with him in sweet friendship, duty will be the ay and means of enjoying the love of thy divine Friend, and e more thou art in his company, the more delightful will be e way of his commandments. These are thy privileges. ead the promises concerning them. Call to mind what thy ather in Jesus has engaged to give his children. Has he t provided grace sufficient for them? And is it not for his nour, as well as thy profit, that he should give both the will d the power to walk humbly with him? O plead his pro- ises. Bind him with his faithfulness. Be importunate ith him, and pray without ceasing. Let this be thy daily ea.

O my God, order my walk according to thy holy word. It is thy mind and will, that I should love thee with all my heart and soul, and mind and strength, and my neighbour as myself; but I am not sufficient for these things. There is no pure love in my soul by nature. Every affection in me is turned from the Creator to the creature. I am in bondage, a slave to lust, sold under sin. I cannot love thee, infinitely lovely as thou art, until thou break my bonds asunder, and set my soul at liberty. But being now redeemed from guilt and fear, I am become thy freeman; and for the unspeakable redemption that is in Jesus, thou wouldst have me to serve thee. Blessed be thy holy name for requiring mine obedience upon this sweet motive—'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage.' On this account obey me: because I am the Lord your God, and I stand related to you, as your redeemer from slavery. O my gracious God and Father, I desire upon this motive to keep thy commandments. I believe that thou art my God in Jesus, and through him I have redemption from bondage to my sins and enemies. With this free spirit would I always go to duty: but I cannot walk in this liberty, any more than I could at first attain it, without thy grace. O my God, let the Spirit of adoption abide with me, that he may draw me nearer to thee in thy ways and ordinances, and I may in them enjoy more of thy presence and of the light of thy countenance. Thee I seek in them. Thou art the end of all ways and means: and if they lead me not to thee, I go empty away. Gracious God, make thy commandments the joy of my heart, and let them be the means of keeping up holy intercourse and happy fellowship with thee. This my heart pants after. Duty without this is nothing worth. I wait in thine appointed ways for the visits of grace, hoping to grow in knowledge and faith, in hope and love. The communion which I have enjoyed has increased my longing. My soul is athirst for God, praying to be more with thee, and more like thee. And is not this what thou requirest, and what thou hast promised to do for me? Grant me then, my gracious God, the prayer of my heart. In all my duties let me enjoy thy presence and communications of thy love. Let me do them in faith, and with a single eye to thy glory. Let me be thus spiritual and heavenly-minded in them, that I may grow up into Christ Jesus in all things.

And I desire, holy Father, to grow in love to thee, that I *may manifest* the fruits of it by my love to mankind. Pardon *every selfish* temper, which is opposite to the love of the breth-

ren; and teach me to love them as thou hast loved me. Whatever thou hast promised, fulfil in me. Make me, O thou Spirit of love, like the loving Jesus. Give me his benevolent tempers, and help me to imitate his beneficent actions. Let his love to me be the pattern of my love to them. Since thou hast in much mercy made me a child of light, O let me shine before men, that they may see and feel my good works, and may glorify thee for them. And the more thou dost in me, and by me, humble me still more, O my God. Keep me meek and lowly, always ready to give the glory of all my mercies to the Three in Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, to whom be equal honour and praise, for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAP. VII.

The Believer goes on his way rejoicing in God.

HAPPY is the man to whom it is given, on the behalf of Christ, to believe. He has the blessing of peace. He is reconciled to God, through faith in the blood of Jesus: and he is freely justified, through faith in the righteousness of Jesus. The Father has accepted him in his beloved Son and it is the joy of his soul to know it: therefore he loves God, because God first loved him. In the enjoyment of this love he finds his heaven begun. By the same Spirit, who manifested it, and shed it abroad in his heart, he is kept seeking for more discoveries of it. In every appointed means he waits. As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth the soul after more of the presence of God, and of the light of his loving countenance. Having a command—Seek ye my face—he obeys it from his heart: but his chief view in obedience is to behold the face of the Lord turned to him in love. He wants fellowship with God in duty, which highly ennobles and also endears it to him. He performs it in faith, and in a free spirit. He goes to it as a beloved child to a most loving parent: and his heavenly Father meets him in it, receives him graciously, speaks to his heart, and makes him sensible that he can deny him no manner of thing which is good. Hence the ways of duty become ways of pleasantness. The farther he advances in them, and the more spiritual he grows in the performance of them, he finds clearer communications of his Father's grace and love, which still increase his joy, and afford him surer earnests and happier foretastes of joy unspeakable and *full of glory*.

As for the ungodly, it is not so with them. They are always seeking after joy. They are busy, and weary themselves in the pursuit of it, but they cannot find it. While they are turned in heart from the Lord, they look downwards for it, where it is not. They expect it will spring out of the ground: and if they cannot discover it upon the surface, they will dig into the bowels of the earth for treasures of hidden joy. But they disquiet themselves in vain. It is the sovereign decree of the Almighty, that nothing can make a sinner truly happy but God in Christ: this they will not believe; and therefore they go from creature to creature, from object to object, inquiring, Where is the best joy to be found? each promises them—It is in me. But each disappoints them. And yet they go on, seeking it to-day in that very thing which deluded them yesterday. Yea, their foolish hearts are willingly deluded. They love to be pursuing what it is impossible they should attain. If after many trials they find the emptiness of one creature-comfort, then they turn to another; and they will try the whole compass of beings and things, and will at last die in the trial, rather than seek for joy where it is holy, perfect, and everlasting.

The believer is saved from this vain pursuit. He has been convinced of the insufficiency of the creature to make him happy. He has seen an end of all perfection in it. He can say, with the royal preacher, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,'—all is changeable and imperfect under the sun: for the whole world lieth in wickedness, and under the curse. Deeply sensible of his error in having sought for joy in the way of destruction, he now seeks it in the living God. Here he comes to the supreme good, the spring-head of true joy: and the streams which he receives from thence are always in proportion to his faith. If this be strong, there is great joy in the soul. If this be weak, joy is at a low ebb. The effect is according to the cause which produces it. Joy in God is the effect of faith; according to the apostle's prayer. 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy in believing.' There is a present fulness of joy which we have by believing, as there is a future fulness of joy, which we shall have by sense. So that joy rises as believing does—fulness of believing brings in *all* joy—present enjoyment increasing as the title to future is clear. The present is the divine pledge of the future, and is therefore given us, that by believing we may now rejoice in *the Lord*, and be glad in the God of our salvation.

From hence it appears, how necessary it is to the believer's

walking in joy, that his understanding should be clearly enlightened with the knowledge of the doctrines of grace, and that his heart should be established in the belief of them. Thou canst not, O my soul, review them too much, nor meditate upon them too long: for they enter into the very essence of all true joy. Study the gospel method of making reconciliation for iniquity, which was the work of Immanuel, and of reconciling man to God, which is the work of the Holy Spirit. Has he done this in thee? Art thou reconciled to God? Is thy conscience at peace? Is thine heart happy through faith in the atonement and righteousness of thy Saviour? Art thou satisfied of thy perfect acceptance in the Beloved? Dost thou therefore obey thy Father out of gratitude, and go to duty to meet him, and to have fellowship with him in his love, and to glorify him for it? Dost thou find his presence? Is he with thee in all means, and art thou seeking in them for nearer and more intimate communion with him? Since this is thy case, what return wilt thou make for such inestimable favours? Surely thou wilt be glad in the Lord, and wilt rejoice in the God of thy salvation. Being at peace with him, and a partaker of his love—waiting for the establishing of this peace and love in the way of obedience, and expecting more communion with thy God in the way of duty, who can have greater reason to rejoice? A saved sinner, delivered by mere grace from wrath and hell, entitled to all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, and already admitted to partake of them, may sing and make melody in his heart all the way to heaven. And yet, alas! how often art thou, O my soul, in heaviness, walking in distress, and cast down, as if thy hope of rejoicing was in vain. And this is not thy case alone. It is too common. How many of God's children spend their days in a mournful frame, and seem to forget their high calling and undoubted title to the fulness of joy? Meditate a little upon the ingratitude of this behaviour, and may the gospel motives to rejoice in the Lord always be the means of saving thee from an unthankful and mournful temper.

First, Observe, he requires it of thee. The Scripture speaks much of the holy joy of believers, and calls for it. They are in duty bound to be glad in their God, as much as to pray to him: for he is always bestowing mercies upon them, which demand their everlasting tribute of thanks: and they cannot be thankful without being joyful. How closely were these two united in the holy Psalmist! None ever more famous for praising God, or for rejoicing in God. What he felt himself

he often exhorts the redeemed to experience: 'Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright: Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart: Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.' Remember his righteousness and holiness, how great they are, and how great the grace is, which has found out a way to make you righteous and holy. Remember those blessings with faith, and your hearts will be glad, and your mouths will praise God with joyful lips. What a sense had the prophet of those blessings when he broke forth into this acknowledgment! 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.' These are the wedding-garments, with which the heavenly Bridegroom adorns his church, and in which he introduces her to the eternal banquet of love. Blessed are they who are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Blessed are they, indeed, for they are arrayed in royal robes: their souls are all glorious with the beauties of Immanuel, with his divine righteousness and matchless graces. They have reason now to rejoice greatly: for they shall soon come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever. These scriptures prove evidently that believers are called upon to rejoice: it is their bounden duty to be glad in their God, for they are not living like his children, and making up their happiness in their Father's love, unless they are rejoicing in his rich and everlasting blessings: for,

Secondly, Joy arises from the sense of some good. Joy in God arises from the sense of his being our chief good, and of our interest in him. And this is the joy of faith: which is not in the least like the light frothy joy of the sensualist, nor the wanton mirth of the unthinking multitude. It is not drawn, as worldly joy is, from vain perishing things, but from the word of God, which standeth fast for ever. It springs from the revelation of grace and mercy in Jesus, and from giving credit to it. Whoever honours its testimony, as the truth of God, will be convinced that he, trusting to the atonement of Jesus, shall never perish, and trusting to the righteousness of Jesus, shall have everlasting life. Hence come joy and peace *in believing*. The conscience is reconciled to God, and is at *peace*. The heart is made sensible of the love of God, and

rejoices in him. This was the experience of the sweet singer of Israel, in the 33d Psalm: 'Our heart shall rejoice in the Lord, *because* we have trusted in his holy name.' This is a good reason. Whoever trusts in God will certainly rejoice in God: for by trusting in his word, and by depending upon his faithfulness, he cannot be disappointed of the good things which God has promised. We have an instance of this in a trembling despairing sinner, who had drawn his dagger, and was plunging it into his heart. In that moment he heard of Jesus. It was given him to feel his want of a Saviour.—'Sirs (says he to Paul and Silas,) what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.' And they preached unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and *rejoiced believing*. O what a happy change was here, and made by believing! The self-murderer forgets his bloody design, and drops his dagger. He hears of a pardon and believes. His black despair gives way to sweet peace in God. His misery ends in the knowledge of a joyful salvation. How blessed are they that believe! God has pronounced them, and God will make them, blessed. There is no misery deserved, but by faith they are saved from it; and no good promised, but by faith they may now enjoy it: they have therefore all the reason to rejoice that any person can have on this side of heaven. For,

Thirdly, This joy is distinguished from the vain joy of the world by its Author. It is the gift of God. It is one of the graces of the Spirit of God. St. Paul says, 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,' &c.—love to God, and then rejoicing in God. When the Spirit of adoption enters into any heart, he manifests, by believing, the love of the Father, and thereby excites it into holy joy. He comes to make the soul happy in its return to God. It is the very end for which he is sent from the Father and the Son, and therefore it is called the joy of the Holy Ghost. It is his fruit, produced by his influence, and kept by his power. It is like himself, of a spiritual and heavenly nature—a pure affection—in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. He refines it from creature-delight, and exalts it above sensual pleasure: for it is the result of nearness to God, and the effect of fellowship with him: which is,

Fourthly, *Another* blessed ingredient in the joy of believers.

It has God for its object. It is joy in God as their God, their supreme good, known, believed in, and enjoyed. The Holy Spirit has consecrated their hearts for fellowship with him. He has brought a free pardon for past apostacy, and full power to dethrone creature-love; and he abides in their hearts to subdue it. He enlightens their understandings to see the vanity of the creature and the fulness of God, and he enables them to reject every thing that promises them happiness, if they cannot enjoy God in it. Thus he keeps their hearts chaste and fixed upon God. Their joy becomes simple, as their faith is: for this looks at the finished salvation, and resting entirely upon it, sees God perfectly reconciled; thereby it lays a sure foundation for their joy in God; because they now know him by faith to be their God, and can see their interest in all the blessings of his love in Jesus. This is the fountain-head of joy, from whence flow rivers of pleasure for evermore. The nearer they live to the fountain-head, the more communion they have with God: their hearts become purer and holier, and their joys are more spiritual and heavenly.

This is the only remedy for the miseries with which the world abounds. Men are uneasy; seek for joy, and cannot find it; because they seek where it is not. They go to broken cisterns, which cannot hold it. They are disappointed, and wonder: but still go on spending their days in this vain pursuit. They do not attain any true joy. It flies from them, and at last they lie down in sorrow. What thanks then art thou bound, O my soul, to return unto thy God, who has saved thee from this delusion? What a mercy is it that thou hast been led to the fountain of joy! O live near to it, and from it derive all thy streams. Seek them all in God, and seek them in faith upon the warrant of the divine promise. He has said, 'The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord'—they shall have it, and increase it. The more meek and lowly thou art, the more wilt thou be joyful in God. Pray then for growing humility, that thou mayest experience the sweetness of this scripture—'Rejoice, in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice'—there is always a matter of joy in the Lord. What a fulness did he find who testifies of it thus—'My joy shall be in the Lord—God is the gladness of my joy—all my springs are in thee—for thou art my exceeding joy.' Happy prince! All his springs came from God, and led him to God. He did not draw his happiness from the brooks, but from the fountain. The brooks dry up, but the fountain cannot. He did not *rejoice in his* crown and dignity, in his victories and treasures,

or in any worldly good. He enjoyed God in them, who was the joy of his heart. He only valued the gifts for the sake of the Giver; for he made use of them by faith, and then they were the means of bringing him near to God, and of keeping up communion with God. Whatever does this is a great blessing. And every thing should do this to a believer. While he lives like a child of God, he exercises his faith for spirituals and temporals; and his heavenly Father blesses him, according to his word, wherein he hath caused him to put his trust, and give him continual matter for joy and thankfulness.

This is the portion of the Lord's people. He has entailed it on them. It comes to them by inheritance. And thou art bound, O my soul, to make use of it. Thy duty and interest call upon thee to enjoy much of it. Thy gratitude for the exceeding great mercies of thy Father's love cannot be so properly shewn, as by rejoicing in him: for the thankful heart cannot but be joyful. It feels happy in God. My meditation of him, says a grateful soul, shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord. This is a just tribute, which the Father expects, and which the Holy Spirit enables his children to return him. 'Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound, they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance: *in thy* name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.' These are great privileges, which God has promised and does bestow upon his people. It is true they do not all alike rejoice with great joy; but they all ought. When their faith is weak their joy is little. But they have the same right to believe, and to rejoice in believing. There is the same provision made for the whole family and household of faith. They are interested in the same covenant, have the same promises, and the same faithfulness to make them good. They have perfect security given them, that they may trust and not be afraid. The people who know the joyful sound of a free-grace salvation, have good reason to believe, without doubt or wavering. By such a faith they will see God perfectly reconciled to them, and will behold the light of his countenance shining on them in love. A blessed sight! To eye it clearly is glory begun; to walk in it is glory increasing. What is it but heaven, to rejoice all the day long? But then it must be in thy Name, in the incarnate Word, in Jehovah Jesus: by faith in whose righteousness they shall be exalted, as high as a creature can be—being justified freely and fully, they have *access into this perfect* grace wherein they stand, and they re-

joice in the hope of the glory of God: and not only so, but they rejoice in the way to glory, in tribulations, also, knowing that all things are working together for their present, and for their eternal enjoyment of God.

For their encouragement thus to rejoice in the Lord, he has promised them, that the joy which he gives shall not be taken away, which is,

Fifthly, Another great privilege. True joy is the gift of God: is a grace of the Spirit of God. It has God for its author, and God for its object; and it has this prerogative annexed to it, that no one can destroy this gift of grace. The Lord Christ declares, that he will not suffer any creature to take away what he bestows, what a rich cordial was this to his dejected apostles! They were mourning upon account of his leaving them, and were sadly cast down, as men without hope. But he revives their drooping hearts with a promise—'I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh from you.' This is indeed strong consolation: for it is one of the streams which maketh glad the city of God—a stream that never fails—it runs out of the ocean of free-grace, and none can stop its running back into it. Not as the world giveth give I unto you, says Jesus. The world giveth empty joys; continueth them by an uncertain tenure, and at last takes away all its gifts, and leaves its deluded votary to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. Whereas Christ gives what is truly good, solid, and lasting. His gifts are without repentance. He is of one mind in continuing, as well as in giving: for his motives are in and of himself, and always the same. His own mere love, his free-grace, and the good pleasure of his own will, dispose him to give and to continue his favours; and his one end is his own glory. Therefore he will not take away the joy which he has given, and he will suffer no one to take it away. He secures by his power what he gives by his love. Such is the believer's right to rejoice in the Lord alway. His title is indefeasible. God has freely given him in Christ all the good that can make him happy: and he enjoys it and is happy, so far as he lives by faith. While he goes on from faith to faith, his joys increase. Growing faith brings him in a richer harvest of joy. And he is commanded still to proceed, until his joy be full; which is a

Sixth privilege, peculiar to joy in God. Other springs *fail.* They are often dry. And when they run the fullest,

he that drinks of their water thirsts the more. But joy in God has a satisfying fulness. The fountain is always full, yea, is always running over; and all the streams bring happy peace and holy joy. The more a man drinks thereof, the more sober and spiritual he becomes: for whatever flows out of this fountain is grace, sanctifying grace; the more we partake of it we grow more like it. There is in it the divine property of conforming and assimilating us to itself: for it weakens the corruptions of nature, and strengthens the faculties of the new man; and as these grow stronger, they cleave closer to God, and have more fellowship with him. By which means they partake more of his joy. A happy partaker of it declares—'In thy presence is the fulness of joy,' and therefore he prays—'Make me full of joy with thy countenance'—the presence of God with me, and his loving countenance shining upon me, is the fullest joy upon earth. And this comes from the grace of the Holy Spirit, and is received by faith. Our Lord says to his disciples—'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.' His end in speaking was to give them good reason to rejoice, and to continue rejoicing, and if they received what he spake with full assurance, as they ought to do, it would produce in them a fulness of joy. And this would be so much to his honour, and to their profit, that he commands them to ask it of the Father in his name—'Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.' To the same purpose the apostle John, treating of the person of God incarnate, through whom we have fellowship with the Father in all the blessings of his love, says, 'These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.' His design in writing was to lead them to nearer fellowship with the blessed Trinity, and to stir them up to seek in it their fulness of joy: and they have it full, who, satisfied of their title to the Father's blessings, are receiving them freely out of the Son's fulness by the grace of the Spirit. It becometh them well to rejoice: for in the same blessings there is fulness of joy for evermore, joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Put all these considerations together, and then see, O my soul, what a rich provision thy God has made for the joy of thy heart. Admire and adore him for his great salvation, for delivering thee from sin and sorrow, and for the free gift of righteousness and life eternal. To pardon, to justify, to glorify, such an one as thou art, O what divine and infinite grace! What wilt thou return him for manifesting his love to thee, and for *engaging* thy love to him? How great is thy debt to

admitting thee to fellowship with him, as thy God and Father, and for the gracious communications of his love to thee in Jesus! What a subject is here before thee for delightful praise! Look at it in any true light, thou hast reason to be glad with exceeding great joy. God, the infinite fountain of good, is thy God. He rejoices in thee, therefore thou shouldst rejoice in him. He has loved thee freely, how canst thou be sensible of this without loving him? His love hath blessed thee with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus: whilst thou art receiving them out of his fulness, how canst thou refuse to thank him with joyful lips? He says that he rejoices over thee to do thee good; the belief of this should fill thy heart with joy and gladness. Indeed, there is nothing in God but what should be to thee matter of rejoicing. His faithfulness and justice are on thy side, as well as his never-failing compassion: for he is thy God, thy covenant God; he has given his Son for thee, and his Spirit to thee; by his grace thou hast been called to enjoy fellowship with the Father and the Son, and to partake of their covenant-blessings. It is thy privilege to be improving this fellowship, and even upon earth to be tasting of the joys of heaven. May thy faith bring thee in a rich feast, yea a fulness of joy, till thy cup run over with the rivers of pleasure, which are at God's right hand for evermore.

Remember, O my soul, it is thy duty and thy privilege thus to rejoice in God. It is thine interest and thy happiness. Thy God requires it of thee, as the grateful acknowledgment of his favours; they are all of grace, inestimably rich, and everlasting. He would have thee to honour him for the gifts by rejoicing in the Giver. Joy is the sense of his goodness to thee; and canst thou receive the present, and live in hopes of the eternal blessings of his goodness, and yet be without a joyful sense of them? Examine well; and try thyself. How is thy heart? Is it happy in God? Is it happy in nothing but God? Whatever a man puts his trust in, from that he expects his happiness. In what then dost thou trust? Certainly thou wilt say, my trust is in the mercy of God for ever and ever. And should not he be the only matter of thy joy, who is the only ground of thy faith? If he be, then why art thou so often cast down, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? How many dejections, what great sorrows, and what frequent heaviness, dost thou experience. From whence come they? Joy is sown for thee. The sower is the Son of man. The Father has promised it, and bestowed it on thee for thy portion: thou hast been called by grace, and the joy in believ-

ing is thy birthright. What is the reason thou art not happy in thy God, and rejoicing in him always? Search diligently for the cause. Depend upon it, there is a great mistake somewhere. The Scriptures cannot be broken, which treat of continual joy in God. The promises cannot fail. The Promiser is faithful: and yet thou art not always a partaker of the promised grace. How is this? O try to come to the bottom of this error. May the Spirit of wisdom lay it open to thee, and may thy sorrow be turned into joy.

Perhaps thou art seeking for some reason to rejoice in thyself. This rejoicing is not good, although it be very common. It has a bad motive: it comes from pride. The end is bad: it is to exalt and aggrandize *self*, which was man's sin and ruin. It is forbidden in Scripture—He that rejoiceth, let him rejoice in the Lord. If thou couldst find something in thyself to be pleased with, thou wouldst then rejoice in thy pride. Sorrow for not finding it may bring thee right; because it may be the means of shewing thee that thou hast nothing of thine own to look at with self-complacency. What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why wouldst thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? Hast thou any thing of thine own but sin? Who gave thee grace, and made thee to differ from others? Was it not God? Did not all come from the good pleasure of his own will? He saw nothing good in thee at first to move him to be gracious, and what he continues is to the praise of the glory of his own grace. If thou hast lost the sight of these truths, no wonder thou shouldst go mourning. God will not vouchsafe his joy to them who sacrifice to their own net, and burn incense to their own drag. He humbles and fills the humble with good things, but he sendeth the rich empty away. The rich rob him of his glory, and he refuses them his grace. Watch therefore over thy proud legal heart. Be jealous over it with a godly jealousy; and entreat the Holy Spirit to bring down every high thought in it, that thou mayest exalt God, and he may exalt thee. Remember the promise—'The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord:' seek the fulfilling of this; for joy in him is the death of self-seeking and self-pleasing. O beg of God then to keep thee meek and lowly, that thou mayest be willing to live upon Jesus by faith, and to receive all the joy out of his fulness of joy.

Perhaps thou art mourning under a sense of thy sinful nature, and groaning under the burden of indwelling sin, as holy Paul *did, and as all the* dear children of God do, when they

are in their right mind. This is godly sorrow, which worketh repentance not to be repented of. It is the true poverty of spirit, to which the Lord hath promised his blessing. Indeed, every one that has it is blessed, because it is not only consistent with the truest joy, but also is the very proper temper of mind in which it is preserved and increased. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Self-knowledge is the breaking up of the fallow-ground, and is the ploughing and harrowing of it, thereby making it fit for the good seed, and to receive the enlivening influence of the heavens. The more any man knows of himself, the greater reason will he have to seek the harvest of his joys in God, and seeking by faith he will find them. If he be in the deepest humiliation, he will be then best disposed to rejoice in God. This holy joy generally rises highest, when self is lowest: as the highest tide is always after the lowest ebb. Remember this, O my soul, in the most abasing views of thy fallen nature, and it will lead thee to seek, and in believing to find, that in God which thou hast not in thyself. The empty, and none but the empty, may be filled with his joy. Let every discovery of thine emptiness lead thee to trust more in the salvation of God, and to enjoy more of its blessings; and then thou mayest be, with Paul, always sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. Sorrow for self is the greatest friend to joy in God. Self-loathing is accompanied with the sweetest delight in God. May the apostle's experience herein be thine: 'We are of the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.' O pray for the same grace, and thou wilt find that the less confidence there is in the flesh, the more rejoicing there will be in Christ Jesus.

Perhaps thou hast been tempted to seek for joy in some creature-comfort, and hast not received it as the gift of God, nor enjoyed it by faith, nor returned him his glory. Thou wast looking below God for happiness, and expecting it from some other object. The world had herein insnared thy heart. There is not a greater enemy to the children of God: because it has objects suited to their senses, and capable of gratifying them: by which the world is always trying to engage their affections, and always succeeds, when they are not living by the faith of the Son of God: for this is the only victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. See whether thy sorrow did not spring from some worldly disappointment? Thou *hadst dropped* thy shield, and wast falling asleep in Delilah's *lap; but* awaking didst find the pleasure turned into pain.

This pain may be very profitable. It should convince thee of thy dreadful mistake in leaving God for the world, and should stop up thy way for the future. Now thou seest the need of being cautioned—Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; for all things out of Christ are under the curse. There can be no blessedness in them. The whole world lieth in wickedness; it cannot make thee happy any more than hell can. But it is thy privilege to be delivered from this present evil world, and to be saved from the love of it. This is a blessed part of thy salvation. Expect it by faith. The victory is obtained; see thy share in it. 'I have overcome the world,' says Jesus. Almighty Lord, overcome it in me, as thou hast overcome it for me.

But remember, O my soul! whatever be the real cause of thy sorrowing, there is joy in God, and for thee; because he is thy God, in whom there is nothing to make thee sorrowful, but every thing which can possibly give thee true joy. The blessed Trinity are in covenant for thee and for thy salvation. And it is thy bounden duty, trusting to the finished work of the Son, to rejoice in the love of the Father. In the peace of thy conscience, and in the love of thy heart, thou art required to have fellowship with the Father and Son, and to be always giving thanks to the Holy Spirit for this fellowship. Every enjoyment of their covenant-blessings on earth is a foretaste of heaven, and a pledge of joy unspeakable. What thou hast now by faith, thou shalt certainly have in everlasting possession: for there is a sure foundation laid in the covenant for thee to build thy hopes upon of rejoicing evermore. Thy Father has chosen thee and accepted thee in his Son. He has set his heart upon doing thee good, and he changeth not. His loving-kindness is like himself. He has drawn thee by his Spirit to believe in his love, and he has promised to love thee unto the end. He has freely given thee all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, and he reserves the full enjoyment of them for heaven. Nothing can rob thee of them; because he keeps them by his power for thee, and thee for them. How should this help to fill up the measure of thy joys! The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, is thine, with all that his love can do to make thee happy. What canst thou want, but more faith? The Lord increase it, that thy heart and conversation may be more with him. As thine affections are set more on things above, the temptations to the love of the things below will be weakened. *The sweetness of heavenly* communion will deaden thee t

the charms of the world; yea, the world will be to thee as nothing, while God is *all*. And is he not all in all to thee? Consider his nature, his personality, his covenant, his works, his graces, and his blessings: view them in their greatness and goodness; thou hast an interest in them all. His wisdom contrives for thee; his providence watches over thee; his love waits to be gracious to thee; his holiness, and justice, and truth, are thy friends; all his attributes have engaged his power to bring thee to glory. The perfect salvation of Jesus is thine. His Father is thy Father in him, and has nothing in his heart but love to thee: the Holy Spirit has manifested it to thee in believing, to be a perfect, unchangeable, and everlasting love. Whatever the godhead has promised to give of happiness, is promised to thee; and thou dost believe it, although thou art sometimes in heaviness, through manifold temptations. But even then there is joy laid up for thee in God. Joy enough in the fountain. It is always full, only thy faith draws out of it sparingly. Enough in God to turn thy sorrow into joy, if faith did its perfect work. O for more faith, that thou mayest have more joy in believing!

From whatever cause then, O my soul, thy sorrow arose, it certainly did not spring from any thing which faith discovered to be in God. Be assured of this; and learn to improve thy sorrow about other things, so as to see thy need of trusting more, and of rejoicing more, in God. If thy sorrow be lawful, coming from a sight and sense of thy sinfulness, there is good reason thou shouldst abhor thyself, and repent in dust and ashes. But this is also a good reason for joy in thy God; because the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. He gives to them the knowledge of salvation, and makes them glad with the joy of his countenance. Thus he delivers them from their sins and sorrows. He continues his loving-kindness; surely his goodness and mercy shall follow them all the days of their lives. When they are under temptations to seek for joy in other things, he hedges up their way, that they cannot attain the expected good; or if they do, he imbitters the enjoyment, and will not let them find any thing in the creature but vanity and vexation; by which means he would teach them to derive all their joys from him, and from nothing but him. Wait, O my soul, and read, and hear, and pray; be diligent in all means for thine improvement in this divine lesson. Seek the *presence of God*, wherever thou art. Expect his blessing upon *all that thou doest*. Account his love thy chief happiness,

and be sure nothing can make thee happy in which thou canst not enjoy his love. If riches increase, the world smiles, health be granted thee, relations are kind, and all things go well, set not thy heart upon them. Look at the bountiful hand which gives, and depend on the grace which sanctifies those things. They are not worth having but as they come from and lead to God, and so may be spiritually improved. If thou canst live by faith, and enjoy God in them, then they are real blessings: for then thou wilt receive them as his gifts, and use them to his praise; thou wilt eye his goodness in them, and admire him for them: and while he continues them, thou wilt be dependent on his grace to keep thy heart from idolatry, that thou mayest love the gifts only for the sake of the Giver. Whatever thou art going to do, ask thyself, How can this be the means of my rejoicing in God? if it cannot, avoid it. If it come with all the world's flatteries, and make thee the greatest offers of joy, fly from it: there is deadly poison under its gilded outside. Lay it down as an invariable rule of thy walk, that nothing can do thee good but what thou canst enjoy God in. He is the only source of good; and every thing is to thee what he makes it: not what it is in itself; as such, all is vanity: but it is good when God makes it so. True joy is from him and in him. It is the gift of his grace, and does not stop at any of the streams, but goes up to the fountain-head, from whence they flow, and there finds its comforts. O my God, teach me thus to seek my joys in thee, and to make thee my crown of rejoicing.

For thine encouragement, consider, O my soul, what he did to the travellers gone before thee in the way to Sion: how he comforted them, and made them glad with the joy of his countenance. He led them indeed through the valley of Baca (of mourning,) the only highway to the kingdom; but they found a well in it, a fountain of living waters: they went on sorrowing for their departure from God, but were made glad at their hearts in being brought back by his grace: therefore they wept rejoicing. Happy mourners! And hast thou not the same reason as they had to sorrow for thyself, and yet to be exceeding glad in God? It not this also the case with all thy fellow-travellers now upon the road? Their hearts are with God. He is their portion. His heaven is their home. They would not make up their happiness in the accommodations by the way, but in God, their treasure, their supreme good and their everlasting joy. Neither would they be stopped by the inconveniences which they may meet with: these, improved by

faith, will tend to make them long more to be at home: for these will lead them to feel more of the true joy there is in God, and will thereby inspire them with higher strains of praise and thankfulness. So that every thing they meet with on the road, will be sanctified to them, and will dispose them to make melody in their hearts unto the Lord. Their Father and our Father, out of the riches of his grace, has not only given them matter of thanks, but has also provided the very words to be used by them. Many a weary traveller has found them a rich cordial. His spirits have been raised, his soul and all within made happy, while he was singing the sweet and heavenly hymn. The gospel prophet who had seen the glory of Immanuel, and who was the honoured penman of this divine poem, has left us a direction, when any one has a right to sing it, and to make it his own, Isa. xii. 1. 'And in that day thou shalt say.' By looking at the context, the time here mentioned appears to be the day of the Lord's power, when the Spirit of life enters into the sinner, and he is quickened from a death in trespasses and sins. A happy, eternally happy, day. The same Spirit will be his comforter, will bring him to the knowledge of his salvation, through faith in the gloriously complete work of Immanuel, by which he shall find himself freed from guilt and fear, and in Jesus made a partaker of grace and glory. Then the joy of the Holy Ghost is felt in his soul, and his heart is in tune to bless the Lord his God.—'O Lord, I will praise thee, though thou wast angry with me; thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also has become my salvation: therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.' These wells are the fountains of grace, from which the heavenly travellers draw their holy comforts, and with which refreshed they go on from strength to strength, praising Jehovah, and ascribing to him all the glory of their salvation. He was angry with them, and justly. The fire of his wrath might have burned to the lowest hell; and his law, his justice, his holiness, and his truth, would have been glorified for ever in their destruction. But admired be his mercy, adored be his sovereign grace, he himself found out a way to magnify every Divine attribute in their salvation. This was the wonderful contrivance of the Three in covenant. The Father accepted his co-equal Son in the place of his people, and his obedience unto death in their stead: he is now perfectly reconciled to them in Jesus; his anger is turned away

from them. And when it is given unto them to know it, and they receive the comfort of it, when they have joy and peace in believing, oh what a day of light and glory then breaks in upon their souls!—a day sometimes clouded with the rising mists and vapours of the body of sin, but often so bright and serene, that the warm beams of the Sun of righteousness shine directly into their hearts. These are times of great refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The communications of his love are then felt with pure delight, and the soul is made sensible that it is in Jesus a happy partaker of the fulness of joy. The man cannot contain his mighty bliss; and breaks out aloud into thanks, and calls upon the by-standers, to admire the marvellous goodness of God. 'Behold (see here a miracle of grace,)—God is my salvation'—wonder with me at the exceeding riches of this love—Why me? What am I, that the Most High God should be my Saviour? I am sure he never set his love upon one more unworthy, nor plucked any brand out of the burning that was fitter fuel for hell-fire. Oh! help me then, angels and men, to praise and adore that infinite mercy, which contrived, wrought out, and has now applied to me, this salvation, with all its blessings. My debt increases; and I want to praise him more: for in that unspeakable gift of his Son he gave me all things, and he has now given me faith, and has put me into possession. I have his word for it, and I believe it—a word of infallible truth, confirmed by promise, ratified by the covenant oath of the blessed Trinity. These engagements cannot be broken, therefore 'I will trust, and not be afraid.' On the part of the Divine covenanters, all is sure. They have given me the fullest security that can be, and I may take the comfort of it. They will never leave me nor forsake me, and my faith shall not fail. Blessed promise! I shall be kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. Glory be to 'the Lord Jehovah, who is my strength'—his almighty arm holds me up, therefore 'he is my song'—the same arm will carry me safe to the end, therefore my heart rejoiceth in him, and with my song will I praise him. I will make my boast of his strength: all the day long will I be telling of his salvation. How can I mention too often these infinite mercies of my God? I love to dwell on the delightful theme. It warms my heart, it inflames mine affections, and raises my soul to heaven. My joys are all in this one—'He also has become my salvation.' He is my present salvation: for he has opened the fountain, and has opened my heart to

receive the life-giving streams. How can I but bless and adore his holy name, while I am 'with joy drawing water out of the wells of salvation?'

O ye blessed of the Lord, who have received the same salvation out of the infinite fountain of Divine grace, assist me to praise. Your rejoicing with me will increase my joys, and improve my thankfulness. So it follows in the prophet—'In that day shall *ye* say'—*ye;* not one only, as before; but the many partakers of the same mercies will sing in chorus. They will join in social worship, and with one heart unite in the common tribute of praise. 'Praise ye the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Sion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.' Great he is indeed; infinitely—everlastingly great in himself—and to be admired for his excellent greatness in saving sinners. This is his greatest work, and it demands of them their highest praise; and they are glad to give it him. Happy are they now, when humble and poor in spirit they can exalt their Saviour God: but who can tell how happy they shall be when he shall exalt them, and make them partakers of his own happiness? Eternal salvation will demand the tribute of their eternal praise; and they will be most blessedly employed in paying it, when they shall return to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. Crowned heads may well sing; for their corronation-day will last for ever, and the King of kings will put such honour upon his royal friends, that all heaven will ring with his praises. They will with one heart and one voice adore God the Lamb, whose gracious hand wiped away all tears from their eyes, and made sorrow and sighing flee away for ever; and who gave them his joy and gladness, such as are, even in heaven, inexpressible, and will be to eternity full of glory.

O my God, accept of my poor mite. I desire to join all the redeemed on earth and in heaven, in blessing and praising thee at all times. I would give thee praise continually with my heart and with my mouth. I would rejoice in thee, and in nothing but thee: for thou art my God, my supreme good, and mine everlasting portion. Let me then, for thy mercy's sake, glory in praising thee henceforth, and for ever. I ascribe it to thee now with a glad heart, rejoicing in hope, that my praise will be better ere long, and never-ceasing. Thou art worthy

of all that angels and men can pay. To thee, holy Father, with the Son and Spirit, the Three in one Jehovah, be equal and endless praise. To this I give my hearty *Amen*.

CHAP. VIII.

The Believer walks humbly with God, bearing his Cross.

THE happy believer is now advanced a great way in his journey. He has been brought to the saving knowledge of God—has received faith in his reconciled God in Jesus—has been taught by the Spirit to love his God—and has found the blessedness of holy communion with him in the way of obedience and duty, which makes him go on rejoicing; then it is become fit and proper that his faith and love should be tried. He must expect it. It is to the honour of God, to the good of others, and to the establishing of those graces, that proof should be made of them, and that they should be put, like gold, into the furnace. This is only a refiner's fire. If the furnace be very hot, one seven times more than it was wont to be heated, the gold will lose nothing. Sterling grace is purer and brighter for every fiery trial. Its enemies, who blow the flame, have no intention to refine it, and sometimes the believer himself cannot see how the means will answer the end: but God overrules every trial for his glory and the believer's good, and makes it more precious than that of gold, which perisheth. Troubles, opposition from within and from without, all the difficulties he can meet with, only serve to purge out his dross, and to render him more fit for his heavenly walk. Herein the grace of God is most marvellous. Such a power as brought light out of darkness, is continually directing and sanctifying the crosses of the believer, so that not one of them can stop him; nay, the greatest of them help him forward in his journey, and bring him not only more safely, but also more happily to the end of it. Adored for ever be the Father's love, which makes all things work together for his children's good!

When man was in paradise, there was nothing in him but what was conformed to the image of God. His will was one with the will of God. In this state there was no cross. Harmony ruled in the innocent breast; and God looked on his favourite man with delight. They were perfectly agreed, and they walked together in holy and happy friendship. But when man fell, then sin brought in sorrow, in the ten thousand

miseries which the body suffers, and in the entire corruption of the faculties of the soul, particularly the will, now at enmity with the will of God. Hence our crosses. Sin is their fruitful parent: and while we are in a body of sin and death, we cannot be exempt from suffering: for man is born to trouble as naturally as the sparks fly upwards; but the unregenerate man does not feel the cause of this. He has no spiritual senses. He is dead to God. He does not know why he suffers, and he is not sensible of what he deserves to suffer, therefore he goes on merrily, laughing and singing under a load of guilt, enough to ruin a thousand worlds. But when the Spirit of life enters into him, and he is made to see his state, to feel his guilt, and to fear his danger, then he begins to groan under the cross. Every day he discovers how totally he was fallen, and departed in heart from the living God. He now tastes the bitterness of sin, and finds the deadly fruits of it. Although there be a remedy provided to bring the wanderers home, and he is made acquainted with it, yet he is without strength to apply it. He cannot by believing take the comfort of it. When it is given him to believe, he still has sin and suffering to exercise his faith. Against his corruptions and temptations he must be continually fighting the good fight of faith. From this warfare he can have no discharge but by death. He must take to himself the whole armour of God, and be under arms night and day, or he will never be able to resist the assaults of evil spirits, or to overcome the opposition of evil men. This is the heritage of all the servants of the Lord. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. If they be on the Lord's side, all his enemies will certainly be theirs; so that if they enter into his kingdom, it must be through much tribulation. The King himself went this way to the crown, bearing his cross; and he has assured us there is no other way—'Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, *cannot* be my disciple;'—he must deny himself what by nature he loves, and must love what by nature he hates: unless he live in this state of self-denial, which is to be his daily cross, he cannot live in communion with me, as one of my disciples. If he be one of the highest of them, yet he must carry his cross: for he has still a fallen nature, and its senses and appetites are always lusting against the will of God, and it is like plucking out a right eye, to deny them their gratifications, and to refuse them their much-coveted pleasures. He is in a body of sin and death, and must carry his cross to his grave, being liable to all the

sufferings which mortality is heir to, and all the way mortified under them, because he cannot bear them without faith, nor hold out without patience; and these graces are not of himself, but are the gift of God. He is also forced to carry another cross all his days, even the corruption of his nature, depraved in every faculty, and always inclined to evil. This is the burden and grief of the children of God, under which they all groan: and a sore and heavy burden it is, heavier for being continual, and for its always working against the grace and glory of the Lord Christ: for this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated, and appears in nothing more than in their adulterous love to their own righteousness, of which they are so dotingly fond, that after the Holy Spirit has divorced them from it, and their Maker has become their husband, even the Lord their *righteousness*, yet still an unlawful attachment to their own righteousness remains, and is the cause of the greatest crosses, and of the heaviest trials, they meet with in their way to heaven.

Hence the cross becomes necessary for the whole nature of fallen man, for body and soul. The sensual appetites are continually seeking their gratification in unlawful things, and the spiritual faculties are full of blind pride, and self-righteousness, and know no way to the Divine favour, but by their own works and goodness. The cross is indispensably needful to mortify the flesh, with its affections and lusts, and to crucify the vanity of the mind, that, when it would glory, it may have nothing left to glory in but the Lord. In this light let us consider the infinite love, which appointed the outward cross for the outward man, and the inward cross for the inward man; and let us see how, by each of them, communion with God is preserved, and the believer is helped forward in his blessed journey.

CHAP. IX.

The Believer, exercised with the outward Cross, carries it with patience, and finds it a great help to him in his Walk heavenwards.

We call that a cross which opposes our will. This opposition renders it painful and grievous. A very little matter, the least trifle, becomes a great cross, when our will is set much against it. How then can the believer rejoice with a heavy cross upon his back? or how can he rejoice all his days, if he must carry it to his grave? The blessed gospel discovers how this may be, and the blessed Spirit gives the expe-

rience of it; for he continues to teach the doctrines of grace, and under the cross he enforces them. What has been treated of in the former chapters he now applies with life and power. The doctrines are put to the trial, and it appears that they are of God; for none could produce the effects which follow upon believing them, but an almighty arm. Faith is tried in the fire, and the believer is convinced it is the faith of God's elect; for the promise is made good—'When thou walkest through the very fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' His love to his reconciled God is put into the fiery furnace, and it comes out like the three children, sensible their God had been with them in the furnace, and their God had brought them out; for which marvellous instance of his love to them, their love was increased to him. This is God's way. He gives grace, and then tries it. When he has enabled the sinner, by believing, to find peace and love, then he would improve those graces by daily exercise; and if the exercise of them be very sharp and afflicting, it is only to establish the truth of his heart, and to confirm the affection of his soul more perfectly in his God. *His* God. Mind that. His God still. The cross is not sent to weaken that relation. He is the same tender father to his children, when he puts it upon them, as when he takes it off; and he would have them by faith to experience it. While they depend on his being perfectly reconciled to them through the obedience and sacrifice of Immanuel, they will see the same paternal affection invariably set upon them, and always disposed to do them good. His love changeth not. The happy objects of it have given this glorious testimony, even when under his cross—'*We know* that all things work together for good'—they found it so. Whatever he sent to them came with a message of his love. 'Hear ye the rod, and him that sent it.' They hear what he says by it, for it speaks of the Father's love, and the belief of this quiets their minds under the stroke of this rod. Thus it answers his purpose—This cometh not forth of the dust, but is appointed for me; my Father sent it, not in anger for the punishment of my sins, but in the tenderness of his affection—He is not dealing with me as the supreme Disposer of all events, who may afflict, and justly, his rebel creatures according to his sovereign will; but he has sent me this affliction with a message of grace and peace—I know it is well ordered—I kiss the rod, and I bless him that sent it.

The Apostle Paul uses this argument to the suffering Hebrews. They had endured a long and great fight of afflictions.

They had need of patience. He therefore gives them, in the 11th chapter, a short history of the Lord's favourites, and shews that they all carried his cross, and that he supported them all under it; yea, gave them strength to run their race, till every one of them won the prize. Then he requires them to look to Jesus, the greatest sufferer, out of whose fulness they might receive faith to run, and patience happily to finish the same race. And lest they should be weary through suffering long, or faint in their minds under hard suffering, he reminds them of the character of their heavenly Father, who, out of the tenderest love, appointed their crosses:—'Have ye forgotten the exhortation (says the apostle,) in which your Father speaketh unto you as unto children? *My son*, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof *all* are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.' O what a blessed exhortation! How full of love—the love of God the Father—love to his child, who wants correction—love that would not touch him with the rod, till he had most tenderly informed him of his gracious purpose. *My son*, my beloved, this chastening is from thy Father. It was determined for thee by covenant-love, and settled upon thee for thy portion in the great charter of heaven. All thy crosses were then mercifully appointed—their weight and measure—how long—how great—how many—what strength was needful to bear them—what comforts under them—and what holy fruits should be produced by them—all was fixed by love, is now given in love, and is to bring thee to greater enjoyment of my love. My dear child, despise not then my chastening, nor faint when I rebuke thee. Be assured it is for thy good. There is a *needs must*. It is so necessary, that I cannot love thee without chastening thee, nor receive thee among mine adopted without scourging thee. See then how thou takest my correction. Look at thy temper and behaviour under it. Examine. Art thou patient? Not suffering merely, but suffering quietly, is the proof of thine adoption—If ye *endure* chastening—if when I afflict, thou canst possess thy soul in patience under mine afflicting hand, then I deal with thee as with sons—I give thee thy portion of suffering, and I give thee thy portion of grace to bear it. All my children want correcting, and they all have it: for what son is he whom the

Father chasteneth not? They are all sufferers. Mine only begotten was the greatest. None of you can suffer as he did; but whoever is following him must share with him in his cross, and bear it after him. If any be without my chastisement, whereof all mine are partakers; if they cannot bear it; have not faith to receive my loving correction, and therefore no patience to wait the blessed issue of it: such do not belong to my family; they are none of mine; they are bastards, and not sons.

How should the argument in this Scripture reconcile the believer to suffering? How easy, yea, how happy, should it make him under the cross! He suffers, but it is from his Father, who, in most perfect love and infinite wisdom, appointed the cross, and appointed also the precious fruits which it should produce. O my soul, keep this in mind. Remember whose cross thou art carrying. Thy Father contrived it: He sent and continues it, that it may work under him for the best. It is the chastening of his richest love. Receive it then patiently, thankfully at his hands, and thou wilt find it full of blessings. But take heed how thou consultest sense, or carnal reason. These are always enemies to the cross: for they judge of it only by feeling, and always refuse to believe what God says concerning it. Adhere to the truth; and reject every suggestion which would insinuate to thee, that there is any thing but love in the chastening of the Lord. He is thy Father. He never loves thee more than when he chastens thee. There is no hatred in his heart, no vengeance in his hand. He assures thee of this from the infallible word of his mouth. Here may thy faith be settled; believe him, he is doing thee good—he is promoting thy best interest. Cast not away this confidence, and then the cross will be the means of bringing thee to the nearest and holiest communion which thou canst have with thy Father on this side heaven.

In this suitable light look upon thy Father and thy friend. Never forget it, O my soul, but keep it in the faith of thy heart, especially when he chasteneth thee. Then expect from his love patience under his stroke, and after it the peaceable fruits of righteousness. These will grow abundantly upon the cross. They grow no where else so rich and ripe. Survey the promises which he has made to his suffering children, and wait in faith for a joyful harvest. In due season thou shalt reap, if thou faint not. And the cross is intended to keep thee from fainting; because thy Father sends it for the increase and for the strengthening of thy faith Read and study what he says

to thee upon this point. Learn and inwardly digest it. In time of trouble thou wilt find great comfort from depending upon the promise of the Father to give thee a happy issue. Meditate then upon the Scriptures, in which he has declared his gracious purposes in afflicting his children; namely,

First, It is for the trial of faith. God gives it, and then tries it; that it may appear to be his grace, that men may see it, and honour him for it, and that it may grow by use, which is as necessary to spiritual, as exercise is to bodily growth. Trial shews the truth, and brings forth the power of grace, and is thereby a matter of great joy: as the apostle James testifies, writing to the twelve tribes in their dispersion and affliction: 'My brethren, count it *all* joy when ye fall into divers temptation, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience; but let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.' God be thanked for this word of strong consolation! What a precious Scripture is it! How full of encouragement to the believer to look with delight at *temptations!*—not temptations to sin, but trials sent from God to keep from sin. When he falls into them by providence, and meets them in the way of duty, then he should judge of them, not from sense, which can feel nothing but sorrow in afflictions; but he should take account of them from the declared purpose of God in sending them, and he should wait in faith for the blessings which they are to produce. God says, that they are matter of joy, of *all joy*, of all true spiritual joy—they are not only such in his account, but he also makes them such to the believer. Accordingly we read in Scripture of many who did rejoice in trials. The Hebrews did: for they took *joyfully* the spoiling of their goods. Paul did: 'I am comforted (says he;) I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.' Nay, he went farther—'We *glory* in tribulation.' He leaped for joy with the cross upon his back. He boasted and triumphed under it. What the world accounted his worst, he made his very crown of rejoicing: for he knew and found that the trial of faith worketh patience: faith receives the cross from the Father's love, and learns to bear it after Jesus: by the grace of the Spirit, the bearing of it, as it exercises, so it improves patience. The believer becomes more acquainted with it. Use, we say, makes perfect. He learns where the strength to bear is—from whence his comforts are to flow—and from whose hand the blessed issue is to be received. He waits, therefore, with sweet submission to his Father's will, that patience may have its perfect work, that

by trials it may be exercised, by sharper trials it may be improved, and by daily trials it may appear to be the genuine grace of the Spirit, perfect and entire, lacking nothing. This the believer aims at. He would have every thing that belongs to true patience and growth in it; he would have it refined by every fiery trial, and made purer and brighter, that it may hold out, till it has done its perfect work. The apostle Peter gives the same encouragement to the same afflicted Hebrews: he exhorts them to faith and patience under their sufferings, in these words: 'Ye are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time; wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; and the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.' What treasures of love are laid open in this Scripture! Read, O my soul, and adore the exceeding riches of thy Father's grace. He knew how needful afflictions were, both for the flesh and for the spirit, and therefore he appointed thee thy portion, and he has in mercy informed thee of his design in them. He has revealed his will for the ground of thy faith, that when he sends them, thou mightest experience the blessings promised to his suffering children. The belief of his love, in contriving and in proportioning them to the ability given thee to bear them, would administer matter of joy in sorrow, and by trusting to his faithfulness thou wouldst greatly rejoice, thy joy would so far exceed thy sorrow. The heaviness is but for a season—the joy for ever. The heaviness only during the trial of faith—the joy increased by that very trial. The trial was only to prove the truth of faith, and to evidence the power of it—not to weaken, but to strengthen it—not to destroy, but to refine it. The refiner does not intend to lose one atom of his gold, but puts it into the fire to purge away the dross. So does God. 'When he hath tried me (says Job,) I shall come forth as gold.' He was tried in the fire, and his faith was found unto praise, and honour, and glory. Therefore he is set forth for an example of suffering affliction and of patience. Behold, we account them happy, not who suffer, but who endure suffering. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord abounds in compassion, and is of tender mercy. O my soul, wait upon the same Lord, and he will bring all thy trials to the same blessed end. He has the same pity and

mercy to thee as he had to Job. Thou hast the same reason to believe it as he had. Thy faith is tried in the fire, as he was, that it may come out of it like gold. The trial was appointed in perfect love, and is to produce the greatest blessings of love. Thy God has most gracious designs towards thee, in putting thee into the fire. It is to try thy faith; whether thou canst trust him there. It is to improve thy faith by the trial, that thou mayest trust him more. If thou hast trusting faith, it is to teach thee patient faith. It is a hard lesson to learn to trust against sense and carnal reason, and to say, This cross is good for me, I desire to submit, and to take it patiently at the hand of God. Oh! it is very hard to believe that there is nothing but love in every suffering; and it is harder to find it so, while suffering. And yet the Spirit of God declares there is nothing but love in it, and by believing thou wilt certainly find it. May every trial of thy faith establish it, and thereby bring forth,

Secondly, The blessed fruit of patience. The cross does good to faith; because by it God teaches his children to bear up, and to hold out; trusting to his promises, and waiting in hope for his fulfilling them, and thus it exercises patience, which is a grace of the Spirit, learned only in the school of Christ, and therefore the giver of it, among his other high titles, is called, 'the God of patience.' He first enables his afflicted children to believe what he has said of his love in afflicting them, and then to wait for the experience of his love under their afflictions. This waiting quietly, without giving way to sense, or unbelief, is patience. Faith is tried, and stands the trial. Tribulation comes, faith is exercised with it, but holds fast its confidence in the word of God, and thereby has full proof of the faithfulness of God. This worketh patience—a quiet submission to the Divine will—and a holy subjection to the Divine rod. The flesh murmurs, self-will repines, self-indulgence rebels; but faith looks up for the promised strength, and by it conquers them. It stops their mouths with a hush—be still, and know that he is God—he is my sovereign and my Father—this affliction indeed is not for the present joyous, but rather grievous—nevertheless it comes from his love, love guides his hand, love will bring good out of it—Oh! that all within me may submit to his will, and bless his name!

But the cross is hard and painful: flesh and blood cannot bear it. True; but grace can. To endure is the proper work of patience. It endures by trusting to the word of God, and

by receiving from him the promised strength. What cannot such a grace endure? When God says, 'Fear not; I will be with thee, when thou goest through the fire:' the believer is hereby forewarned of the fire; and when he is called to go through it, he expects the presence of his God, that if the bush burn, it may not be consumed. How comfortably does the apostle Peter speak of this to the suffering Hebrews; 'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing had come unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.' He would have them to be accustomed to the cross, it being the only way to the crown. There is nothing new or strange in it. All the crowned heads in heaven carried it, while they were upon earth; yea, the king of saints went bearing it before them. There never was sorrow like unto his sorrow; and yet for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, and despised the shame. Take up thy cross, O my soul, and follow him. Look unto Jesus. He will give thee strength.—He has taken the curse and wrath out of thy suffering. Thou wilt see it, the fruit of his love to thee, and it will be the means of engaging thy love to him. What if it be a burning fiery furnace; is it not almighty love which calls thee to go into it? Not to hurt thee, but to try thee, to give thee happy proof of the soundness of thy faith, and of the power of thy patience. He would have thee to know, that thy patience, trusting to his tried word, is invincible; that no blow can beat it, no fire can burn it, from Christ. He would bring thee to experience what the prophet did, when he said—'Thy word is tried to the uttermost, and thy servant loveth it.' The good word of God was tried, as far as it could be, and the trial proved its truth, and therefore he had fresh reason to love it. The trial increased his confidence in the truth, and his experience in the sweetness of its promises; thereby his patience was confirmed, and he could rejoice, inasmuch as he was a partaker of Christ's sufferings, both of their infinite sufficiency, and also of their mighty efficacy to save. By enjoying these blessings under the cross, his heart was happy in the joy set before him. He had the earnest and the foretaste of heaven; for he knew that when the glory of Jesus should be revealed, he should be glad with exceeding joy.

But the carnal mind is ready to complain—this would be true, if the suffering was short, but it is long as well as hard—

I have borne up a great while, but now my patience is quite tired out—I am ready to give all up, being weary of my life with the length of my trials. How many have I known in this melancholy case! Fair blossoms in the mild and gentle spring. In fine weather and smiling sunshine they looked beautiful, and gave hopes of their being in the tree of life, and of their growing and ripening upon it. But, alas! a trying time came, a bleak cold north wind, and a very sharp piercing frost—like leaves in autumn, down fell the promising bloom. My heart has mourned again and again at the fall of one and another, and mourns, while I am writing this, over several now living, who have forsaken God and his ways, for the world and its delights. They met with trouble, and it was too much for them. They were tempted, and they had not strength to resist. The reason is thus assigned—'He that received seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.' He is offended and falls away, because he had no root; and they who have root are too often tempted to be offended at the cross. They find it very difficult to bear up under it. Natural infirmity, remaining corruption, and strength of temptation, make pain and suffering grievous to the flesh: yea, when they are forced to bear the cross long, and it is very heavy, they are apt to murmur and fret, grow discontented, are tempted to unbelief, and, if they give way to it, to despair. How necessary is it, then, that they should be enabled to possess their souls in patience, under their great and many trials! To which end, nothing can contribute more effectually, than a settled faith in the word and promise of a reconciled God. This will stay and quiet the soul when trouble comes. It is the chastening of my Lord, says the believer—my loving Father sends it for good—he is only trying my faith and patience, and the trial will end well—it is grievous indeed at present, and I go on my way weeping; but I have my supports now, and I shall soon reap a joyful harvest. I have a faithful promise for it, which is a constant cordial, and keeps up my spirits. My God will be with me as long as the trial lasts—he says he will. I believe him, and therefore expect his promised presence and strength, till faith and patience have their perfect work. Such a cordial the apostle James gives to the Hebrews. They wanted it much. They were greatly oppressed by the rich, and some of them were perse-

cuted even unto death. 'Be patient, therefore, brethren,' says he, 'unto the coming of the Lord; behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth, and hath long patience for it until he receive the early and the latter rain: be ye also patient; establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.' He puts great stress upon the Lord's coming: 'Yet a very little while, and your Lord will come to appear for you.' It is true you are in a fiery trial, but your God calls you to it; and it may seem to you a long trial, but he has promised you grace sufficient to bear it. Trust him then, and he will keep you patient. He knows your frame and temper, and bids you look about you. See, how the husbandman waits, having only a general promise, that seed-time and harvest shall not fail; and is it not more reasonable that you should wait with patience the end of the Lord. He sows his seed, and leaves it. It endures much hard weather, frost and snow, rough winds and wintry storms. Summer comes, but he must still wait: his corn is in ear, yet it is liable to suffer from long drought and from blights, and to be beaten down with heavy thunder showers; but he has long patience. At last he is not disappointed of his hope. He reaps the precious fruit of the earth, and gathers in his joyful harvest. Behold, O my soul, and imitate. How strong is his faith! Is thine like his? God has only said that the seasons shall not fail: he has not said that the harvest in every field and country shall not fail: yet the farmer sows in faith, and waits in patience. But the promise is sure to thee: 'He that believeth shall never be confounded;' and dost thou believe this with a hope that maketh not ashamed? He has long patience; how is thine? Art thou not weary and faint in thy mind, especially when the course of Providence seems to run counter to thy hope? Canst thou hold thee still in the Lord, and abide patiently upon him, when he chastises thee, and seems in anger to cast thee off? He waits long for a harvest of perishing things, and canst not thou wait to have thy fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life? O what need hast thou of patience! Seek it, pray for it, beg of thy God to establish thy heart, that thou mayest be rooted and grounded in faith: and if troubles come great and heavy, thou mayest possess thy soul in patience, so long as the Lord shall please to exercise thee with them. And never forget that he will certainly come, and quickly. Let this promise keep thee from fainting. He will *come in* with his supports; he will administer his comforts *under the* cross; he will remove it in due season. What can

be required for the establishing of thy heart, which is not promised thee in this scripture: 'Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward; for ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise: for it is but a very little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Wait then on the Lord, O my soul; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.'

Perhaps thou art ready to reply—I have waited long, but am still to learn: for my trials are so varied, that as soon as I have been well exercised with one sort, presently it is changed, and another comes to which I was not accustomed. And this continually, like Job's messengers, one after another; and still the last brings a sadder message than the former. Hard and long trials I have endured, but this constant change of them wearies me out; they come so unexpected, they find me so unprepared, they so harass my troubled mind, that I am ready to sink under them—frequently I am tempted to think, that if God loved me, he would not delight in afflicting me in this manner.

Thus the carnal mind is apt to reason against God and his ways; but when the believer goes into the sanctuary and consults the oracle, he receives an answer of grace and peace, and is satisfied that this change of trial is nothing new with God. It is his usual method of training up his children in faith and patience. He appoints troubles for the exercise, and all sorts of troubles for the improvement, of their graces. The Captain of their salvation was made perfect through sufferings; so are all the soldiers of Jesus Christ. It was the remark of one of his champions—'*Many* are the troubles of the righteous.' The apostle James, speaking of the persecuted Hebrews, says, 'They had *divers* temptations,' different one from another; and his brother Peter tries to comfort them under their *manifold* afflictions, many in number succeeding as fast as wave follows after wave; and of many kinds: some distressed in their bodies, others in their minds, in their character, in their substance, in their families, in every way that affliction could be felt. Patience is the grace suited to all these trials; because it bears them in the strength of God: for it consists in trusting to his sure word of promise, and believing it against sense and feeling. Faith says, This present trial comes from the love of my covenant God: Patience says, Then I will bear it, till he bring it to a good issue. Whatever the trial be, patience has the same promise, and the same promise-keeping

God to trust in. If he send variety of trials, it is only to give a variety of proofs, that he is faithful who hath promised. He knows we have divers diseases, which must have divers remedies to heal them. We have manifold evils in us, which require manifold afflictions to subdue them. And our God intends to give us many blessings, and he appoints many troubles to bring us to the enjoyment of them. All these are gracious dispensations, mercifully contrived, and seasonably administered, that patience may learn to bear, and may learn to persevere in bearing. God changes the trial. Patience has a new lesson, and a new opportunity of improvement. A good teacher brings his scholars forward, and when they are gone through one book and are well grounded in it, then he advances them to another: when they have learned Latin, he puts them into Greek. But he does not change their studies out of ill-will or hatred to his scholars. They had rather be at play than minding their books; and they had rather get but one lesson, and be saying it over from day to day; but the master knows what is best for them, and he keeps them to their work. God trains up his scholars in various exercises, but all for their improvement. He does not consult what would please them, but he changes the lesson as he sees needful. He knows when their faith wants confirming, when their patience needs establishing, and therefore, in much mercy, he sends a new trial for the growth of those graces. Lest they should mistake his meaning in varying his trials so often, he gives them this general rule: 'There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' The Father will exercise his children with no trial but such as is common to man; and he will enable them to bear it; and he will make a way for them to escape. How should these considerations silence thy murmurings! If the trial be new to them, yet it is common to man. If it be hard to bear, yet grace is almighty to strengthen patience. If it last long yet it shall end well. How convincing are these reasons! How patiently should believers, influenced by them, submit to the chastening of the Lord! And yet there is still unbelief in them, which will be urging fresh complaints, and stirring up impatience.

The poor sufferer, feeling his smart, is apt to think—Any cross but mine would be tolerable—I should not say one word *against God*, if he tried me with any other: but this cuts me

to the heart—Oh it is a very agony both to my flesh and spirit —there is nothing like it—it is so exactly calculated to cross my temper, to hurt me in the tenderest part, and to rob me of my most beloved gratification: that it is the very thing in the world from which I could have wished to be exempted. Any cross, Lord, but this.

Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest thus against God? Hold thy tongue as it were with a bridle. Let not self-will murmur, and folly speak against the chastening of the Lord. He says that he is dealing with thee as with sons. Where is thy faith, then, that sense and feeling should be permitted to plead, and to be heard against the witness of God and his word? Where is thy patience, that thou canst not bear the present cross, but wouldst take up any other? Alas! alas! mistaken man—what canst thou bear in thine own strength? Thou feelest the smart of thy present cross, and it makes thee peevish and fretful: the smart of any other would have the very same effect. A less than this; the least thing in the world that opposes thy will, would stir up thine impatience. Observe thy temper, how it catches fire at any little opposition from men. The same temper will be inflamed, and rage, when God chastises thee, if thou refuse to receive his correction. Thy rebel will is the cause of thy pain, and makes thy cross so bitter: for if God's will and thine were one, there could be no cross, but his will is almighty, and yet thou resistest it. God puts his yoke upon thee, and thou art like a stubborn beast, which only hurts and galls itself, by striving and kicking against its work. He tries thee with one cross, and thou art dissatisfied; thou couldst contrive it better for thyself. Thou wouldst be thine own lord and governor. Self-will, they say, is a sure guide to self-destruction. Beware then of thine own will. When God calls thee to take up any cross, do not wish for another. He sends this, and to it he requires thy submission. It is thy duty, and thine interest, to receive it for the exercise and for the improvement of thy patience; but, instead of taking it up quietly, and waiting for the good fruit of it, thou art quarrelling with it, and opposing the will of God. O take heed of this vain attempt. It is a snare laid for thee; a fatal trap, into which the love of independence seduced the first man, and which, ever since, easily ensnares his posterity. When thou art tempted to murmur at thy present cross—consider what it is—meditate a moment upon thy Father's love, who most mercifully appointed, who most seasonably sent it —and if it be nothing strange, but common to man, then do

not try to shift it off, but seek the promised grace to bear it. There is not a cross that he will lay upon thee, but he has laid it before upon others, and it will tend greatly to the peace of thy mind, and to the restraining of thine own will, to observe how he dealt with them. Take notice then, how he, in love, exercised them with every cross that can be laid upon thee; how he supported them under it, and what blessed fruit they reaped from it.

This is the kingdom of the cross; and it is the Lord's will, that every disciple in it should be as his Master. He has chosen them to suffer with him, as well as to reign with him. And, therefore, intending to call forth his gifts and graces into daily exercise, he has honoured them with the daily cross. He sees it needful often to change it, and he has informed them of his gracious designs herein. Therein is scarce any kind of suffering, but some or other of his people have been tried with it, and he has left promises in Scripture of his support, and of his coming in with comfort, and, in due time, with deliverance. So that whatever thy cross be, it is not sent, O my soul, to hinder, but to promote, communion with thy God, and to help thee forward in the heavenly way.

Art thou pinched with poverty—a believer, but in distressed circumstances? Blessed art thou of the Lord. 'Hearken, my beloved brother, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?' What a mercy is it to have thine outward estate thus appointed for thee by the choice of thy heavenly Father? and the same estate which he chose for his best Beloved. In the exceeding riches of his love, he decreed that thou shouldst be poor in this world, as Jesus was—he knew it was best for thee, and he chose thee rich in faith: outward poverty was to be the means of thine improvement in spiritual riches—thy want of temporals was to bring thee to live more by faith upon eternal things. O how good is thy God! He sent thee poverty to enrich thee. It is to bring thee near to God, to keep thee near to him, and to afford thee daily proof of his precious love. These are some of the blessings of rich faith, and these are worth more than all the treasures of the world. Be content then—thy God will supply all thy need. Be thankful—thou art an heir of the kingdom. Bless thy God—no creature out of heaven has more reason to bless him that thou hast. He is thine—all things are *thine.*

Perhaps thou art tried with bodily pain and sickness: these are hard trials. To endure them is the very crown of patience; but strength to endure them is promised, and in waiting upon the Lord will be received: so that outward pains shall produce inward joy. Thus we read: 'The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.' He is weak—God strengthens him; he is sick—God comforts him; he is in pain—God smooths his bed, and he lies patient. Sickness cannot be pleasant in itself, but is profitable for its fruits. It is the appointment of God, and teaches submission to his sovereign will. It comes to the believer with a message of precious love—this bitter cup is sent from thy heavenly Father, who has many gracious purposes to answer by thy taking it—he would humble thee, and let thee feel what thou art, and what thou deservest—he would mortify the life of sense. He would give occasion to increase faith, and to advance patience—drink it up—there is a rich cordial at the bottom—the taste of it will draw out thy heart in love to God. Happy sickness, which promotes spiritual health! Blessed pain, which the kind Physician often makes the way to pleasure, yea, to the sweetest communications of his love!

Art thou in the fire of persecution? Are thy friends and relations all in arms against thee, for leaving them to follow Christ? Is thy dependence upon them, and art thou greatly tempted to make some compliances, lest they should cast thee out, and thou shouldst come to poverty? This may be a fiery trial; but it is a blessed one. He will make it so, who says, 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: because greater is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you.' This persecution will be so far from stopping thee in thy way, that it will both help thee forward, and will also make thy journey pleasant. Thy friends revile thee: look up to him who, when he was reviled, reviled not again. He will turn their reproach into a blessing. They persecute thee: the goodly fellowship of the prophets carried the same cross, and found it no hinderance to their spiritual joy. They say all manner of evil of thee: take heed that they say it falsely, and for Christ's sake: and if thou suffer for him, and art evil spoken of for thine attachment to him, then rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is thy reward in heaven. Thou art a sufferer with him, and thou shalt also reign with him. Look forward to the promised kingdom. Expect it in

faith, and the prospect will give thee, at every step, joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Perhaps this persecution may be carried on to acts of injustice, even to the depriving thee of thy property: thou mayest suffer the loss of all thy worldly goods for Christ's sake. When God calls thee to this trial, he will give thee strength to bear it, and thou shalt be a great gainer by thy loss. So Paul found it: 'I have suffered the loss of all things, and I do account them but dung that I may win Christ.' So it was with the Hebrews: 'They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance.' What love was here! God was their portion, and their great reward. He had made them happy in the sense of his love; and to manifest the reality, and to demonstrate the power of it, what great things love can do for his name's sake, he took away all their earthly delights. Let them go (says Paul,) I part with them as freely as I would with so much dung, for I have experienced that the loss of them has brought me to nearer fellowship with my precious, most precious Jesus. Happy parting (say the Hebrews,) farewell goods and chattels—we rejoice at the spoiling of our goods, because we have got faster hold of the substance by the loss of the shadow—outward comforts are gone, but inward richly supply their place—we are robbed of our earthly possessions; thank God, we cannot be robbed of our better and enduring substance: for it is reserved in heaven for us, where no moth or rust can corrupt, and where no thieves can break through or steal; in this faith we find our hearts free and light and happy in running the race that is set before us.

The trial may be something still nearer. It may be the loss of thy dearest relations. The wife of thy bosom is taken from thee. Thy favourite child is dead, perhaps drowned or burned, or killed at a stroke: the delight of thine eyes is gone, and thine heart is ready to break. All sorrow is not forbidden, but sorrowing even as others who have no hope. Tears may flow, but Christian hope keeps them within their proper bounds; it restrains and sanctifies them. Thy wife is dead, thy child is dead: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. He requires thee to forsake loving wife and children, be they ever so dear, if love of them cannot be enjoyed without forfeiting his love: 'And there were great multitudes with Christ, and he turned and said unto them, If any man come unto me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and *children,* and brethren and sisters, he cannot be my disciple.'

The disciple gives up himself to the Master's disposal—to learn of him—to believe in him—and to love him. 'My son (says he,) give me thy heart.' He has a right to it, and he will admit of no rival. It is his temple and his throne, in which he alone will be worshipped and honoured. He is a jealous God; and if any love hinder love to him, it must be torn from the heart. O disciple, read this scripture, study it carefully, and it may be the means of shewing thee the true cause of thy great sorrow about worldly relations: it is because thou hast so little love to thy best relation and friend, Jesus Christ. If thy love to him was what it should be, thy heart would not be so grieved at those losses; but would, in patient submission, acknowledge—It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.

Perhaps thou art mourning for the loss of living friends. They have forsaken thee. Old connexions, as dear to thee as thine own soul, are broken. Persons whom thou hast known from thy childhood, and with whom thou hast grown up in strict friendship, are now thine enemies, and become so without any offence or fault of thine. They hate thee, because thou art a real Christian; and their hatred is harder to bear, because the world joins with them in it, and thy name is every where cast out with contempt.

It must be so. The decree cannot be altered—I *will put* enmity between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent. God put it, and put it for ever. The enemy broke out, as soon as there were two born into the world. Cain hated Abel, and slew him. Ever since, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit. There has been one, and but one, perfect man upon the earth since the fall; and the enmity of the world followed him unto death. Lest we should marvel at its following us, he has forewarned us: 'If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you: if ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' What a strange reason is this! Because I love you, therefore the world hates you. What God chooses, the world rejects. Why then, O my soul, dost thou court its smiles, or fear its frowns? The world, which lieth in wickedness, cannot love thee, and its enmity cannot hurt thee. Remember the words of Jesus: 'These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace: in the world ye *shall* have tribulation; but be of good courage, I have overcome the world.' I have

overcome it for you, and I will overcome it in you: tribulation from it shall not hurt your peace in me, but shall increase it: I will make my love the sweeter for its enmity; troubles from it shall be well repaid with my joys: and when it quite casts you out, then will I take you into my bosom, and let you know what the affection of the heavenly Bridegroom is.

Why then, O my soul, art thou afraid of such an exchange? Is it not for thy profit to part with the world for Christ, and to give up its joys for his? What greater gain canst thou expect, than to win Christ, and by him to be crucified to this present evil world? Dying to it, thou wilt be more alive to him, and therefore happier in him. As other ties are dissolved, thy heart will be knit closer to thy Divine lover. Warmed with his precious love, 'clothed with the sun, and the moon under thy feet,' thou wilt hasten thy steps heavenwards; yea, thou wilt be ready to take wing, and to fly to the embraces of thy dear, ever-infinitely dear, Jesus. Thou wilt want no comment upon the words of the bride, the Lamb's wife, but will gladly use them after her: 'Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.'

In former ages, the children of God were often deprived of their liberty, cast into prisons, and bound in chains. This seems to us a heavy cross. To be shut up in a dark dungeon, put into fetters, and deprived of every worldly comfort, requires great patience: but even this did not stop them in their way to heaven, nor in the enjoyment of God by the way. Paul, the prisoner of the Lord, often mentions it among his highest honours, that he was accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. He and Silas were cruelly beaten with many stripes, at Philippi; were put into the inner prison, and their feet fastened in the stocks; but the Lord was with them, and he turned their prison into a paradise; his joy made them forget their wounds and pains; for, at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed, and *sang praises* unto God. This has often been the case since their time; the Lord has often visited his prisoners, and the light of his countenance has made them happy in their bonds. Indeed, we are not called to this kind of suffering at present; thanks be to his grace. This is a day of such uncommon mercies, that we have more to fear from our want of thankfulness, than from our want of liberty. I pray God we may not grow licentious, and abuse our great privileges; but may he enable us so to value them, and live up to *them*, that he may be honoured for continuing them to us, and

to our posterity. In former times, also, believers were often forced to seal the testimony of Jesus with their blood. And even this did not stop them in their walk, nor hinder their communion with God. Hear one of his martyrs: 'The Holy Ghost witnesseth, that bonds and afflictions wait for me in every city; but none of these things move me, neither account I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus.' This was not a vain brag. He spake it in humble depending upon his Master's promise, that he would stand by him when his blood should be shed, and would make him a happy conqueror in the hour of death. And he was more than conqueror; but the grace which made him so was not peculiar to, or the privilege of, an apostle; the same was given to a noble army of martyrs, who overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. What a triumph of patience was this! They were enabled to bear any thing, even the loss of life, rather than suffer the loss of the Lord's favour. Examine, O my soul, whether thy faith be like theirs. Canst thou endure as they did? How is thy patience under the cross? Read what they went through, who are well reported of by the Holy Ghost for their faith, and remember the same grace is promised to thee, to carry thee patiently through all thy sufferings: 'They had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings: yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth, and these all obtained a good report, through faith.' They are celebrated by the Holy Spirit, for having patiently endured, till they had run their race, and finished their course with joy. He sets their example before thee, that thou shouldst not be slothful in running the same race, but a follower of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Meditate seriously, O my soul, and reflect again and again upon the great need thou hast of patience. Remember the cross lies in the way to the crown, and thou canst not avoid it. The Lord has appointed it to be thy portion, and it is entailed upon thee, as much as the kingdom is. When he exercises and tries thee with it, he does not act merely as a sovereign, but *as a father*. He deals with thee as with sons. His chil-

dren want, and his children have, correction. None are without it: but they find it hard to bear. The will of the flesh is impatient under the cross. Self-love hates it: carnal reason cannot be reconciled to it. If it be thus with sons, what must it be with bastards? The natural man, when he is brought into great trouble, is like a mad beast. If his pains be sharp and acute, he rages, storms, and blasphemes: if they be also lasting, having no God to go to, he often gives way to despair, and dispatches himself with a pistol, running to hell for relief. O my soul, marvel not at this. If God had left thee to thyself, the same trials might have brought thee to the same unhappy end. How necessary then is patience! without it thou canst not bear the cross, nor hold on thy way under it, nor profit from it. And how necessary are the docrines before insisted on, for the practice of patience! No one can submit to bear the cross, unless he be first persuaded that God is reconciled to him, and loves him in his Son. When he is satisfied of this, he will see all things (the cross among the rest) well ordered for him in the covenant, and all working together for the best. The cross is mercifully sent to make a trial of these doctrines: by it God would manifest the truth, and bring forth the power of them, that it may appear they were not learned as notions, but experienced by his almighty grace. His end is answered. The trial of faith establishes the peace of God in the conscience, and confirms the love of God in the heart, and thereby keeps patience waiting for strength to hold out, and for a blessed issue. The believer, made strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, endures patiently. He knows from whom his cross comes. It is the appointment of his Father, who does not send it in hatred. He never afflicts his children, but in perfect love. He never puts a heavy cross upon them, to break the back of their patience, but to strengthen it, and to train them up to bear greater burdens. He would teach them their weakness and his strength—their wants and his supplies—he would call forth their faith for the honour of his word—and their patience for the glory of his faithfulness. Lord, teach me these lessons. I want the experience of them every day. O my God, make me an humble disciple in the school of Christ. There only can I learn to suffer thy will; to thee I come for this grace. Assist me, O thou Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in reading thy word, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures I may have hope. Enable *me to* meditate night and day on the doctrines of grace re*vealed in* them, and to mix faith with them, that I may be

strong in the patience of hope. O merciful God and Father, I desire to be strengthened mightily by thy Spirit in the inner man to bear thy cross. I would live in a continual dependence upon thine arm to carry me through every trial. O thou God of patience and consolation, enable me to bear thy cross daily to the praise of the glory of thy grace, and to bear it patiently to the end, that I may finish my course with joy. Be it unto thy servant according to thy word, wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Amen; so be it, Lord, Amen.

To receive benefit from affliction is a great blessing. To suffer them with a resigned will, yea, to rejoice in them, as if all the joy in the world was to come to us, is contrary to sense and feeling, to carnal reason, and to human philosophy; therefore our heavenly Father has graciously informed his children of his love in afflicting them: these informations are the ground of their faith, and were given to silence murmuring in their hearts, and to keep them waiting patiently for the promised fruits of suffering. Among which, this is a

Third, and not the least, namely, the crucifying of the flesh, and the deadening of it in those affections and lusts, which, if not daily mortified, should stop the believer in his walk, and would hinder his holy communion with God. When faith has been tried, and is come out of the fire, proved to be the faith of God's elect; and when patience has gone through the fiery furnace, and has found no harm, then it is the Father's will to advance and to improve his children in the doctrine of the cross. They have a carnal mind still, which is enmity against God—a body of sin—an old man of sin—the flesh in them lusting against the Spirit. This their fleshly nature, which doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated, is the greatest enemy to their holy walk with God, in constant peace and growing love: because it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The life of sense in them is always opposing the life of God. Hence the continual war between nature and grace, which if a man does not find in himself, he may depend upon it, he either never was alive to God, or else at that time he is dead to God. If he be living by the faith of the Son of God, he will also be fighting the good fight of faith against all the enemies of his salvation. He will never think of putting off the whole armour of God, until he put off the body of sin and of death: and, until that day come, he will be striving for the mastery over his body, that he may keep it under, and bring it into subjection. How absolutely necessary this *striving* is, appears from the tender compassion of

our God and Father, who has appointed and decreed in covenant love, all the crosses which were to be laid upon our rebel nature, and which were to be kept upon it till death. It is his holy will hereby to restrain its affections, to mortify its lusts, to hedge up its way by thorns and afflictions, and by these means he would weaken its power. Is not this mercy unspeakable? And what more likely method could he contrive thus to crucify the flesh, than to put it, and to keep it, upon the cross? For as the sinful nature is deadened, the new man is renewed, day by day: the one grows more alive by the mortification of the other. The subduing of unbelief, pride, and self-seeking, is the strengthening of faith, humility, and glorifying God. This command, therefore, is frequently given to believers: 'Put off the old man—put on the new—mortify your members which are upon the earth—crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts.' And this is spoken to believers high in grace, as high as ever any went, or can go. The Spirit of God says to the saints at Rome, 'Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof, neither yield ye your members, as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.' The infallible Spirit speaks to the saints at Ephesus: 'Put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, who is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and put on the new man.' The same precept is given, by the same Spirit, to the *saints* at Colosse: 'Mortify your members which are upon the earth.' This is a holy war, and all the saints of God are engaged in it. They are fighting against every thing sinful; but more particularly watching under arms against their own corrupt nature, which is their hardest warfare; because there is no release from it, and it is carried on by continual self-denial, by resisting the affections and lusts of the old man, and by opposing his giving up the members of his body, as instruments of unrighteousness, unto sin. But, as good soldiers of Christ Jesus, they resist unto blood, striving against sin. The Captain of their salvation is always on their side, to encourage them with his promises, and to help them with his strength. He intends to lead them on, conquering, and to conquer; therefore he lays the cross upon their corruptions, as the most effectual means of subduing them; and, to reconcile them to it, he speaks unto them as unto children—

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord. I do *not* afflict thee in hatred, but in covenant love. My design is *to mortify* the body of sin, and therefore I give thee this

wholesome physic. Thou hast many bad humours and corruptions, for which I have appointed this sovereign medicine. Trust my skill—believe my love—depend upon mine arm—and thou wilt infallibly find it profitable to the spirit, however painful to the flesh. Wait, and the end shall be blessed.

To this truth the prophet Isaiah bears a clear testimony. He explains the Lord's design in afflicting his people; and tells them, it was to purge them from their iniquity, to keep them from the love of sin, and to restrain the practice of it. He afflicted them in mercy; but he afflicted their enemies in justice. Hath he smitten Israel as he smote those that smote him? No, he has not. Or, is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him? No, he chastises his in love; he has appointed the measure, the time, the degree, of their correction: 'In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it; he stayeth his rough wind in the day of his east wind: by this—(moderate affliction) therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin'—to keep him back from sin in general, and from the sin of idolatry in particular, as it follows in the prophet: 'When he maketh all the stones of the altar like chalk-stones that are beaten in sunder, then the groves and images shall not stand up.' The altar at which they offered their idol worship, shall be broken down, like stones burned in pieces for lime, and the groves and images shall not stand up, but shall be broken down also. These happy effects shall be brought about by sanctified affliction—iniquity shall be purged—sin shall be restrained—idolatry shall be thrown down. And God says this shall be *all* the fruit and end of his chastening. He tells his people of his design, that they might know their affliction would bring forth good fruit, and that they might wait patiently for the fulfilling of his promise. Blessed are all they that wait for him: they shall never be disappointed of their hope.

How gracious is God in his dealings with his children! He provides the best for them, informs them of it, and, because they have a fallen nature opposite to his holy mind and will, an enemy to his glory, and to their own peace, he acquaints them with his design in subduing it. He appoints affliction for this end. It is the chastening of the Lord. He promises them strength to bear it, and comfort under it. Nothing but good shall flow from it. Iniquity, their worst enemy, shall be crucified: actual sin, springing from the iniquity of their nature, shall be *mortified*; the heart shall be deadened to its old

idols, and as it dies to them it shall be happier in the love of God. O blessed cross! what mercies dost thou bring with thee. Is not that blessed indeed, which, under God, produces such unspeakable mercies? Take it up then, O my soul; bear it patiently, and expect the choicest blessings of the Father's love from it. Why dost thou refuse? It is heavy. It is painful. True; but what makes it so? The burden is from thy rebel will. The pain comes from thy corruption, unwilling to be mortified. Take it up in faith, and thou wilt find strength enough to bear it, and blessings enough to make it a matter of all joy. Lord God, reconcile me to my daily cross. May thy will in it be done. Mortify sin, weaken its power, deaden its affections and lusts. Only, Lord, whatever cross thou sendest give grace with it, that I may bear it patiently, and may wait for its promised fruit. Thou knowest what would stop me in my heavenly journey; if it be my bosom favourite, the dearest object of my love, O tear it from my heart. Thou hast given me a desire to have every rival dethroned. O come, and reign alone in me, almighty Jesus, and subdue whatever opposes thy lawful government. My Saviour and my God, make all within me feel the power of thy cross. Crucify the body of sin. Spare nothing that would hinder my walking with thee, or would deprive me of thy friendship and favours. I bless thee, I worship thee, I glorify thee, for this infinite grace, that thou hast made me willing to have all mine idols pulled down. On thee I depend every moment for keeping them down. O my loving Jesus, carry on thy work, and, in thine own way, subdue sin in me; let me be planted together in the likeness of thy death, that I may be also in the likeness of thy resurrection—dead to sin, but alive to God. I ask this for thy great name's sake. Let it be thy good pleasure to hear and answer. I believe thou wilt. I have thy word for it. There I rest. Amen and Amen.

With this faith review thy mercies. Consider, O my soul, what a good God has done for thee, and what greater things he has still in store. He has, in some measure, reconciled thee to his cross. Thou art convinced it is thy Father's appointment, contrived for the best by his infinite love, and settled on thee for thy richest portion, in time—He sends it for the trial of thy faith, that it may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory—for the exercise and for the improvement of thy patience—for the mortifying of the body of sin, and for the deadening of the life of sense. This is the will of thy *most loving* and tender Father. He sends the cross to be the

means of these blessings. Certainly, then it cannot hinder thy walk with him; but, in all these respects, will tend to keep thee in the way, and to help thee forward in it; and thus,

Fourthly, It will assist and promote thy holy fellowship and communion with God. This is the principal thing in religion. We fell from God by sin, and it is the greatest mercy to be brought back to him again. In this point all religions fail, but the Christian. Christ is the way. No one cometh to the Father but by him: for there is salvation in no other. He only can forgive sins: he only can justify sinners. And this way was contrived in the covenant of the Trinity, for the highest display of their divine perfections; which begin to be manifested when the Spirit of life enters into the sinner, and quickens him; when the Spirit of adoption enables him to trust in the atonement and obedience of Immanuel, and thereby to see God, reconciled, and to call him, Abba, Father. With this faith in Jesus, he expects from the Father's love all the promised mercies. Thus he has fellowship with the Father and the Son, by the Holy Spirit. He stands related to the eternal Three in their covenant offices, and he receives freely in believing, the covenant blessings of each.

Among these blessings the cross is not the least: for it is mercifully appointed to be the means of bringing sinners to this divine fellowship. They go on stubbornly after their own hearts, and in the error of their own ways, until the Lord sends some trouble to stop them. They look wishfully at the gilded cup of pleasure, and drink greedily of its sweets, without any fear of the deadly poison mixed up with it. But when God convinces of sin then comes sorrow: they feel the poison working, in a sense of guilt and dread of punishment, which teach the want of a Saviour, and are a good schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ. So God dealt with the chief of the Old Testament sinners—a giant in iniquity, who surpassed all that were before him in Jerusalem for idolatry and bloodshedding. The Lord sent his prophets to warn him of his guilt, but he would not hearken. He hardened his heart, till the Lord brought upon him the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon: and when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him; and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom; then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God. His case was not

singular. It is a common thing with the Lord to send affliction to make sin bitter, that he may lead his people to true sorrow for it, and that they may seek until they find salvation. And when they have found it, he still uses the cross to keep them near unto himself. Indeed, the cross alone has not this effect, but rather the contrary. The natural man has his fretfulness stirred up by suffering, and cannot help murmuring at the will of God. But grace sanctifies suffering. God makes it a blessing to his children, as by it he exercises their faith in such general promises as these.

If God sends great and many troubles, they shall not separate believers from him; because he will then be with them, as he spake unto Israel: 'Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt.' It was the house of bondage, in which the taskmasters heavily afflicted his descendants with their burdens; but the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. So it was with the Israel of God. They need not fear any affliction: for their God has promised to make them great Christians; the more they are afflicted, the more shall their graces multiply and grow; 'I will be with thee in trouble (says God,) I will redeem, I will save thee from all thy troubles—Many are the troubles of the righteous, but I will deliver thee out of them all—Yea, when thou passest through the water and through the fire, I will be with thee, and will preserve thee from all evil—I will make all these things work together for thy good.' These promises are a great support to faith: for God engages to be with his children in every affliction. He does not intend, that any should separate them from him but that all should keep them near to himself. He says he will be with them: they, therefore, expect his presence; and if their afflictions be very great, they may on good grounds wait for his time of deliverance. And as his word cannot be broken, their trust in it will be confirmed, and their hearts will be established in waiting upon the Lord. If their afflictions continue long, he is with them all the time, making them sensible of their own weakness, and putting forth his promised strength, both that they may endure, and may also persevere in enduring: thus he improves their patience. And because they have still a carnal nature, which cannot bear the cross, God therefore keeps it upon them, in order to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, that as they die unto sin, they may live unto righteousness. Such is *the* declared purpose of God in afflicting his children; he

would hereby cherish these graces in them, by which communion with them is kept up; and as these grow, communion with him will grow in proportion. Faith will look more at the truth, and live more upon the faithfulness of God. Patience will depend more on his arm, and the less happiness the believer can find in the creature, he will seek and will find the more in his God. The mortifying of the old man will, of course, make the new man more alive: for as the power of the cross of Christ is laid upon the former, the power of the life of Christ will be experienced in the latter.

But such is the goodness of God to his children under the cross, that he has given them several very particular and express promises, in order to strengthen their faith and patience. He has shewn them what fellowship they are to expect with the eternal Three in their covenant-offices: for promoting which he most mercifully provided the cross. O my soul, attend to this; carefully survey this rich contrivance of Divine love, and when the cross is sent, take it up in faith, and expect to be partaker of its covenant blessings.

Remember, it is laid upon thee to promote communion with thy God and Saviour. The appointed trial comes. It is to give thee proof of the soundness of thy faith in Jesus, and to let thee see, by experience, that thou hast not believed in vain. Thou hast fled to him for refuge, from sin and guilt, from wrath and hell: he took thee into his protection, and now thy safety in him is to be attacked. It will be seen that the foundation upon which thou standest will bear thee up in the hour of temptation. If thou hast indeed fellowship with him in his glorious salvation, it will now be made manifest, to thy great profit. The cross is laid upon thee, a heavy, a bitter cross: it deprives thee of all sensible comfort, and is kept upon thee till thou hast no prospect of any. Hope in creature comfort has failed: this is a sweet season for spiritual communion with thy Jesus. He has deadened the enjoyment of other things, that thy heart might be happier in him; therefore now thou art to bring the principles laid down in the former chapters into practice. Here is a fair opportunity to make use of them: for without them a man must sink under such a cross; but, through faith in the righteousness of thy God and Saviour, thou wilt not only have powerful arguments, but wilt also have powerful grace, to bear thy sufferings, patient under them, and thankful for them:

Under them thou wilt be tried—It is good ground, upon which I have built my hope of salvation? It is the rock of

ages? Does it bear me up safe, and keep me unshaken in this time of trouble? Yes; blessings, eternal blessings on my precious Jesus: I have fled to him for refuge, and he has set my feet upon a rock that can never be moved: Christ, my passover, is sacrificed for me: in the blood of sprinkling I have put my trust, and I am safe from the destroyer: he is my propitiation, in whom I have redemption through faith in his blood: he is mine advocate also with the Father, standing in his presence as my surety: while the Father sees him and loves him, he will see me in him, and love me with the same love: Jesus is mine atonement with him, my righteousness, my sanctification, and my full redemption. O thou most lovely loving Jesus, I have often been happy in the sense of mine interest in thee, but never so happy as now. This cross is sanctified indeed: for it has removed what hindered my communion with thee, and has brought me to seek thy presence, and to enjoy thy supports and thy comforts. I was foolish enough to wish it might pass from me: but this was mine infirmity. Pardon it, my sweet Jesus, and accept mine unfeigned thanks for thy late mercies. Never in my life did I find the virtue of thy sacrifice in the peace of my conscience, nor had I such intimate communion with thee in thy finished salvation, as I have had under this cross. It tried me indeed, but the trial was to thy glory, and to my profit. I am now more satisfied than ever that thy salvation is infinitely perfect, and that I have my share in it: I have indeed now; for I am a partaker of the things which accompany salvation. I am making use of them—I find their reality—I enjoy their sweetness—blessing and thanks and praise, without ceasing, be unto thee, my adorable God and Saviour.

Is it not, O my soul, thy fervent prayer, that thou mayest live in holy friendship with Jesus? Why then dost thou fear his cross, which is his appointed way and means of improving thine intimacy with him, and likeness to him? O study the discovery of his love in the Scriptures; and take particular notice of the promises which he has made to his suffering brethren. Read, mark them, mix faith with them, that they may be fulfilled in thine experience. Remember, thou canst not suffer but by his will, to which he expects submission: he sends the cross to teach thee this lesson. It cannot hurt thee if thou dost not quarrel with it; but if thy will be resigned to his, herein thou wilt have fellowship with him; and thou wilt *have* reason constantly to be praying to him—Not my will, *Lord,* but thine be done.

Consider, for the improvement of this fellowship, that thy Lord himself was exercised with the cross. He has gone before thee, bearing it. He has taken the curse and wrath out of it, and has sanctified it to all his followers. In faith they must take it up, and in patience carry it, or they will not come to the kingdom. Certainly then, their crucified Lord will be with them: yea, he has promised, 'I will be with thee in trouble'—seek his presence, O my soul, under the cross—wait for communion with him—he has said he will be with thee: expect, therefore, the light of his countenance, which is better than life. Do not fear the cross, since it is to bring thee such a blessing; it is to be the means of thy fellowship with Jesus, in his sensible support and heavenly comfort; take it up then. Suppose it removes all thine earthly joy: let it go. The pain of its loss is not to be compared with the joy of thy spirit. Jesus will give thee pure holy joy; and, by his divine art, will extract it out of pain. He afflicts that he may comfort. He takes away sensual that he may give spiritual pleasure. He removes creature-love, that he may communicate more of his happy love. In mercy he chastises. He sees there is need to mortify sin. He sends the cross for this purpose, and blesses what he sends. It works like wholesome physic. But, oh! it is bitter, it is nauseous to the taste. Why do you chew it then? Swallow the pill. The benefit is not to be found in the mouth, but in the stomach. There it will purge bad humours. The sovereign Physician intends it should operate upon every evil temper which would hinder your blessed communion with him, and should be the means of exercising those graces by which that communion is maintained and may be improved.

Such is the cross of Christ—taken up in faith, and carried in patience; it promotes daily fellowship with him, which is the greatest blessing upon earth. There is no greater in heaven: only they enjoy it by sense, and we by faith. But we have the same fellowship with them in Jesus, and the same communion with them in the graces of his salvation. And for these he makes way by his cross. He deadens the soul to the life of sense, that it may feel more of happiness in him. When he has withdrawn other joys, he often shines into the heart with joy unspeakable. He generally vouchsafes these his love-tokens to his suffering brethren, and gives his richest cordials in their deepest distress. Each of such happy souls can say—It is good for me to suffer with Jesus. Yes, Lord, I am thy witness; thy cross is good; it has been

the means of my greatest good; for thou hast brought me by it to forsake communion with other objects, and to enjoy communion with thee in thy precious love. If thou hast been pleased to take away any of my beloved objects, thou hast, in much mercy, supplied their place with thy presence. I have found my losses my chief gain. O my Jesus, Lord God Almighty, I bless thee and adore thee for the distinguishing grace vouchsafed to me under the cross. It was entirely from thee, and the effect of thy love, that I had any patience or any fellowship with thee in the way of suffering. It was thy doing, and I glorify thee for enabling me to maintain peace with the Father through faith in thine obedience unto death, and for satisfying me that my crosses were appointed and sent by covenant-love. Thou art the giver of these blessings, and on thee I wait for the continuance of them. Whatever thou callest upon me to suffer, order it and me, as seemeth best to thy godly wisdom; but leave me not to myself. Be always with me, my good Lord, that I may bear thy cross, and carry it patiently and profitably, thou sustaining both me and it every step of my way to heaven. Hear me, my Jesus, and answer; for without thee I can do nothing; but strengthened by thee I shall be able to bear all things, and my daily cross will keep me in daily communion with thee to my profit and to thine eternal praise. *Amen.*

Thus the cross of Christ is sanctified, and keeps up communion with him in the blessings of his salvation. So it does with the Father in his love. In the covenant, his name is expressive of his office. He is a Father who has every holy affection and feeling of love. He embraces, in the bowels of the tenderest parent, all his family—Christ the head, and all the members of his body the church. With one undivided love his heart is set upon Christ, and them, and with the same bountiful hand he blesses him and them. What Christ is they shall be. In this most gracious relation he stands to the whole household of faith. He is their Father who loves and accepts them, pardons, justifies, sanctifies, and blesses them with all spiritual and eternal blessings in Christ Jesus.

It is hard to believe this under the cross. To cleave to him in love, as our Father, when his hand is lifted up to smite, yea, when we smart under his rod, then to see love in his heart, and love guiding his hand, is faith very triumphant. We are apt to look upon our sufferings as coming from the *wrath of God.* We think he must be displeased, or else he *would not* delight to put us to pain: upon this account we are

not reconciled to the cross, but would shake it off if we could. The Scripture gives us a different view of this matter, and represents God in a more amiable light, even in the severest chastisement of his children. He is their Father, and they are his sons. This relation cannot subsist without his chastening them. He informs them of the necessity of it, he declares to them his purpose and grace before the chastening, and he assigns the motives and ends of his proceeding. He has always the same Father's love, and is always dealing with them as with sons. His cross is one of the chief marks of it. He sends it with a message of love, and it comes to them big with mercies. When the Father intends an abundant communication of his love, he generally makes way for it by some heavy cross; and when he would continue or increase his favours, he keeps the cross upon them. It is his appointed means of promoting fellowship with him, in the graces and blessings of his fatherly love. And it answers this end, when it is received by faith, and carried by patience: for then the believer, resting on the sure foundation laid for him, in the holy life and death of Immanuel, sees the Father reconciled, and expects every promised blessing from his love. Whatever cross comes, he receives it from his Father in Jesus. He holds fast this truth—God is my God—he loves me perfectly in his Son, and therefore I shall find some proof of his fatherly love in this affliction. But if his faith be weak, if he forget, or forsake for a time, his foundation, then the cross will become intolerable. Murmuring will arise. The flesh will hearken to unbelief. Fretfulness will take place, and thus God will be robbed of his glory, and the believer of his comfort. It has pleased God, therefore, in order to strengthen his children's faith against these attacks, to give them many plain declarations of his invariable intention to do them good in all their afflictions. The Son is a witness for him: he was in the bosom of the Father, and knew all the purposes of his heart. He has given us a most delightful account of the Father's design in afflicting his children; 'I am (says he to his disciples) the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman: every branch that beareth not fruit in me, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, *he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*'—The Father looks upon all his children as one with Christ; as much united to him, and in him, as the branches are in the vine; therefore as a wise husbandman, he takes the special charge and care of them. Every branch that does not bear fruit in Christ—

it is not as we read it, every branch in me, but every branch that does not bear fruit *in me*—whatever it may seem to be—in profession, a branch—in shew, a fruitful branch, yet it has no life; it was never cut off from the old dead stock, nor grafted into me, the life-giving vine. The husbandman knows this well. Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. He does this in an hour of trial. Then it appears that such branches were only in appearance united to the vine: for if he had made them part of it, he would, no doubt, have continued them in it; but he took them away, that they might be manifest that they were not one with the vine. This is a great part of the vine-dresser's business—he suffers no rotten branches upon his vine. He goes over his charge, and attends to every branch. If any seem to men, or to themselves, to be in the vine (for hypocrites are great self-deceivers, and the self-righteous love to be deceived, and proud nature is fond of growing into Christ by something of its own) the vine-dresser in due time, discovers their mistake, and manifests to the world that they were not branches of his grafting: for he *taketh them away:* but every branch, says Christ, that beareth fruit by its communion with me, he *purgeth:* by his divine husbandry he removes every thing which would stop its growth and hinder its fruitfulness. The branches of the vine are so weak that they always want a prop—he supports them. They often run very luxuriant—he cuts them with his pruning-knife. They have many bad humours and juices in them—those he corrects. He purges every noxious quality; and whatever is contrary to the holy nature of the heavenly vine he subdues. Most merciful is his purpose herein. He would have the branches of his own grafting to be lively and flourishing—like the stock upon which they grow. 'I am the vine (says Christ,) ye are the branches.' God's husbandry is to make the branches like the vine: therefore he purgeth them, in order that they 'may bring forth much fruit.' And is this his design? Does he afflict them entirely for their good? Does he send every trial and trouble to purge their corruptions, and to quicken their graces? Has the Lord Jesus given us such a pleasing view of his Father's love, assuring us that all crosses are sent by him, to make us more lively and more fruitful? Since this is the case, what great reason hast thou, O my soul, to expect these blessings from the cross! Here is a promise for thy faith to *rest on;* a promise, which discovers the heart of thy Father, *and his* abundant love in afflicting thee. He would have thee

not only to believe in his love, but also to enjoy it. He afflicts thee; but it is in order to thy keeping up communion with him under the cross, and he knows it is the best means of keeping it up, and of promoting it. O seek then, by faith, for the promised fruit. Expect in patience the rich harvest. And that thou mayest quietly submit to the Father's will in purging thee, as a branch, observe how exactly the apostle Paul agrees with his blessed Master: 'Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, who corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily, for a few days, corrected us, after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be *partakers of his holiness.*' There is a reverence due to earthly parents, and children are required to submit to their correction; although herein they often consult their own will and pleasure more than their children's profit. And is not greater reverence due to the Father of our spirits, and shall we not submit to his corrections? Especially since his design in them is to promote the greatest dignity and highest happiness of his children, even to make them partakers of his holiness: for to *partake* is not only to give them a title to, but also to give them possession of, to communicate, to have fellowship, with him, to share with him his *holiness.* Holiness is the Father's image in his children, by which he makes them like him, and capable of enjoying him. He chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy. He chose them in Christ, and made Christ their sanctification. In him they partake, as branches in the vine, of his holy nature. They are one with him in righteousness and true holiness. He is the divine root, from which all the branches, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, derive their nourishment and growth. From him is their fruit found. And the heavenly husbandman purposing to make the branches very fruitful, has provided effectual means. Among which the chief is his fatherly correction. This he sends to all his children, and in the tenderest love. He would have them to bring forth much fruit, that herein he may be glorified—holy fruit, produced by his care and culture, and ripened by daily communications of his grace. Therefore he appoints many heavy trials and crosses, by which he designs to bring them not only to believe in his love, but also to a growing enjoyment of it. He would communicate to them an increase of its blessings. He would have them nearer to himself, and more like to

himself—Holy *as* he is holy—not in degree, but in likeness. He would teach them more submission to his will, for which he wisely and mercifully suits the cross. He would improve their love to him, which he does by manifesting his to them: therefore he sends his cross to deaden their hearts to other love, that he may give them a happier sense of his. And his children have found suffering times blessed times. They never had such nearness to their Father, such holy freedom with him, and such heavenly refreshments from him, as under the cross. It only took away what stopped the increase of this happiness, which thereby was made more spiritual and exalted. The cross, thus sanctified, is the greatest blessing on this side of heaven. Because by it the Father keeps his children in the closest communion that they have with him upon earth; by it he purges them, makes them fruitful, and partakers of his holiness; by it he crucifies the life of sense, deadens them to the world, mortifies their lusts and passions; and by it, as the outward man perisheth, the inward man is renewed day by day. Most blessed renewal! Daily the Father communicates (and by means of the cross) new life, new strength, and new comfort, to the inward man. By the right spirit renewed within him, he learns the necessity of the daily cross—he sees the merciful appointment of it to teach resignation to the Father's holy will, to work a conformity to the first-born among many brethren, both in suffering and by suffering, to bring in sensible experience of the Father's support and comfort. What blessings are these! How great! How precious! to be branches in the vine, and to have the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the husbandman, who grafts them into him—O what an infinite mercy is this! And to be under his special care, faithfully watched over, in order to remove every thing hurtful, and to bestow every thing useful, this love passeth understanding. And to have this love to feast upon in the absence of other comforts, to have them taken away only to make room for this, to enjoy this most plentifully, even unto troubles and afflictions, and to be only purged by them in order to bring forth much fruit; these are triumphs of Divine love. O my God and Father, I confess and deplore my frequent mistaking thy dealings with me. I did not see they were all in love. Through mine ignorance and self-will I thought thy cross was a punishment, and I used wickedly to despise the chastening of the Lord. Pardon thy servant concerning this thing. Forgive mine opposition *to thy cross*, and subdue mine impatient desire to shake it off.

Holy Father, mortify my will, and make it bow to thine. Thy will be done in me and by me. Purge me, and make me fruitful under the cross. Chasten me, that I may be a partaker of thy holiness. I bless thee, O my God, for the desire which I have to keep up communion with thee in my sufferings. I believe thou art my perfectly reconciled Father in Jesus; and, therefore, trusting to thy love in him, I would take up thy cross, and expect under it thy covenant blessings. Yes, Lord, this is of grace. Thine be the praise for shewing me the need of suffering, and of renewing me by it in the inward man to a conformity to thy holy will. I now see thy love herein. It is as much love to crucify the outward man, as to renew the inward man. I believe it in my judgment, O blessed God, let me experience it in my heart and walk. Order all my crosses, that they may work together under thee, for thy glory and for my good; and if afflictions abound, let consolations abound also. I have thy promise, and I rely upon it. Let it be fulfilled unto thy servant, for thy dear Son's sake. *Amen* and *Amen.*

This blessed communion with the Father and the Son, which the sanctified use of the cross is made the means of promoting, is maintained by the Holy Spirit: he is a person in the godhead co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and with the Son. It is his office to apply and to make effectual all covenant blessings. Faith in the Son, and through him, love to the Father, are from his influence. He is the Lord and giver of all spiritual life, and of every spiritual enjoyment; for so the apostle teaches in his prayer for the Corinthians: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.'—This communion of the Holy Ghost consisted in partaking by his means with the Lord Jesus Christ in his grace, and with the Father in his love. The Holy Ghost made the application: he quickened the soul, and inspired the breath of life into it, and on him it depends for every spiritual act, as much as the life of the body does on its breathing. Whoever steadfastly believes in Jesus under the cross, and experiences under it the Father's love, has this fellowship with the Father and the Son, by the operation of the Holy Spirit. Therefore that sweet grace, which bears up with faith in Jesus, and with patience under the Father's rod, is said to be from him: 'The fruit of the Spirit is *long-suffering*;' he enables the soul to wait quietly; and if the time be long, and the suffering hard, he gives long patience. He does not take away the cause of

pain, but he bestows strength to bear it, and by it he produces a plentiful harvest of graces and blessings. Thus he teaches us himself: 'Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby.' These are the fruits of the Spirit; they are all of his producing; and they are fruits of righteousness, which none can produce but those who are one with Christ; and in him righteous before God. Although sense cannot perceive how they should grow or ripen upon the cross of Christ, yet faith can. The promise is sure; and waiting faith, exercised with suffering, finds many promised fruits. O my soul, consider this precious Scripture, and with close attention. Study it. Treasure it up in thy heart. It contains a rich cordial for the afflicted.—Observe, there is love in sending the cross, love to be manifested by it, and heavenly fruits of love to grow upon it. Why then is suffering so hard? Why art thou so little profited by it? Is it not generally barren, because thou art not looking to the word of promise, and depending upon the Holy Spirit to give thee the promised fruit? Ask thyself, therefore, especially in the hour of suffering, am I now expecting the communion of the Holy Ghost, that by his grace I may partake with the Son in his salvation, and with the Father in his love? Is this my present experience? There is no bearing the cross without it. Art thou then, O my soul, trusting to him for this happy fellowship, and hoping that as thou art a branch in the vine, and the husbandman is now purging thee, thou mayest bring forth much fruit? And observe what kind of fruit it is. All the effects of being in union with Christ, and of having communion with him, are called *fruits of righteousness.* Christ is the vine. The branch must be one with him before it can live and grow—one with him in his life and death—a partaker of his Divine righteousness—and then the branch abiding in him by the influence of the Holy Spirit will be made fruitful in love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. He brings forth all the fruit that is to the glory of God—And it is all *peaceable* fruit; for it is produced by him in consequence of covenant-love, by which the Father is revealed as the God of peace, and the Son as the great peacemaker: and when the Holy Spirit enables the poor sinner to *believe this,* then he gives him joy and peace in believing—*being justified* by faith, he has peace with God through Jesus

Christ. The cross soon comes after this—not to destroy, but to try this faith—not to take away, but to confirm this peace—it is sent to give proof of the soundness of faith, and to manifest the sweetness of Divine love: for it comes from the God of peace, and all the fruits which he intends to produce by it are *peaceable*, such as should increase the happy sense of peace in the minds of his children. And for this purpose the Holy Spirit abides with them. He has revealed the Father's love in Scripture, and he is a faithful witness of it to their hearts. He sheds it abroad, and satisfies them of it. Yea, he gives them sensible experience and enjoyment of it under the cross. This produces a quiet submission to his will, and an humble dependence upon his power; which are manifested by waiting upon God in all ways and means for the grace promised to his afflicted children. The cross requires great grace, and therefore calls forth much prayer. Suffering times are praying times. The cross brings sinners upon their knees—Manasseh in affliction entreated the Lord—so did Paul—Behold, he prayeth. It keeps believers upon their knees, as the prophet witnesses: 'Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.' The Lord himself declares the same: 'I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early.' Accordingly they did seek him: 'Come (say they) and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.' O blessed fruit of affliction! when sanctified by the Spirit it teaches the children of God to pray fervently, and to continue instant in prayer: it discovers the weakness of the flesh, and the rebellion of the will; and shews the necessity of drawing near to God for strength and patience. It keeps the mind in a praying frame, expecting, by the grace of the Spirit, communion with the Father and the Son. The cross makes this communion necessary. It cannot be endured without a belief of the Father's love in Jesus, and therefore the Spirit of prayer keeps this belief in exercise, and enables the soul to plead the promise of strength, to endure patiently, and to bring forth much fruit. The promise cannot fail. They who trust in it cannot be disappointed, but shall find grace to help in time of need. As prayer is thus necessary, so the Holy Spirit generally makes it sweet under the cross. Is any afflicted among you? Let him pray. Prayer is the appointed means of his comfort. If affliction send him to God, God will meet him, and make

him joyful in his house of prayer. How encouraging are these words: 'Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.' In every case of distress, draw nigh in faith to God; he is a very present help. Seek his face, and you will find him near unto you: for the Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him; nigh to hear, to answer, and to comfort. Thus his promise runs: 'Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.' What is your burden? I am present to give strength to bear it. What is your grief? Here are my comforts. Do your tribulations abound? Here are my consolations abounding also. Here I am. Ask what you will, believing, and it shall be done unto you. O what times of refreshing are these? The Holy Ghost sensibly comforts the afflicted. When they draw nigh to God, he is present to make their hearts joyful. He dispels their darkness with the light of his countenance, and turns their mourning into joy. And thus they have not only communion with God in prayer, but also such communications of his heavenly love, that they can often say, It is good for us that we have been in trouble.

In times of trouble, the *word* also is generally sweet. All people in distress look out for some comfort; and the Holy Spirit directs believers to the Scriptures: 'Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.' The afflicted feel their want of patience and comfort, which puts them upon careful hearing and reading of the good word of God. They want to know what it says of their case; and when they meet a suitable promise, then they have a ground of hope. Their present trials require them to seek for something more than the truth of the promise. This being credited, they therefore expect the promised blessing. When the famine was in Canaan, Jacob and his family could not have been kept alive by believing that there was corn in Egypt; they must either fetch it or die. Trouble calls for the experience of the promised blessings, and when they are received at such a time they are sweet indeed. They feel as ease does after pain. When the Holy Spirit applies the comfort, the promise by which he applies it, is precious. It is like a reviving cordial to a fainting heart. O how sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth. Honey is sweet, but the word is sweeter. When, through patience, and comfort of the Scriptures, the afflicted believer enjoys the good of the promise, then he can say—Now I

know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me: let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.

Sweet is the comfort which the afflicted receive from God the comforter, under the cross; not only *in* suffering, but also *after* it. *Afterward* also 'it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness.' He who carries the cross of Christ, does not labour in vain, and spend his strength for nought; but he is bearing forth good seed. If he sow it in tears, yet he shall reap in joy. The Lord looks at the fruit, and intends to bring forth much of it by the cross: we are apt to look at the suffering and to forget the fruit. He has the end in view in the use of all means; and the Holy Spirit has revealed this clearly, that we might depend upon him for receiving the proper fruit of affliction. The Lord says, he led his people through the great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery flying serpents and scorpions, and drought; that he might humble them, and that he might prove them, to do them good at the latter end. He intended to do them good. This was first in his heart. Then the way in which he would do it: he would lead them through many afflictions, by which they should find, at the latter end, how good God was to them. The promise of this was their encouragement to bear the cross, till they reaped the fruit. In like manner the Lord says to the afflicted Jews: 'I know the thoughts that I think towards you (saith the Lord;) thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end'—such an end as you would wish, and, having my promise, such as you may safely hope for—my thoughts indeed are not as your thoughts—you think I have cast you off, and that your present cross is to crush you—no, I mean to do you good by it—and so the end will prove—wait a little in faith, and all will come to a happy issue.

Are these Scriptures the truth of God? Has the eternal Spirit promised in them, that although the bearing of the cross be very painful, yet it is very profitable! Will he afterward cause them to bring forth much fruit, who have been exercised with it? Art thou then waiting, O my soul, under all thy troubles, for the promised end? Dost thou expect it, and in patience tarry the Lord's leisure? Canst thou look back, and see how merciful the dealings of thy God have been—how gracious his rod—how loving his correction? Canst thou look forward under every cross, persuaded that God will do thee good at the latter end? That he will cause many

peaceable fruits to grow upon this seemingly barren tree? Yea, that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work for thee an eternal weight of glory far more excellent than can be conceived? O God the Holy Ghost, I do believe it: I would not doubt of the truth of the promise in thy word, nor of the truth of thy grace in my heart. I therefore beseech thee, O thou Spirit Jehovah, to enable me to keep up communion with thee in all my trials, that I may bring forth those peaceable fruits of righteousness. Thou art the giver of every grace. I acknowledge thee to be the author of my spiritual life: I was dead in trespasses and sins, and thou hast quickened me. It is of thy mere gift that I have any faith, and that upon the trial it was found to be true faith: I bless thee for this grace, and humbly pray for the continuance and for the increase of it. Meet me in the use of all means, and enable me to grow in faith, rooted and grounded in Christ Jesus, that I may also grow in love to his Father and to my Father. O thou Divine revealer of his heavenly love, shed it abroad more abundantly in my heart, that I may learn more resignation to his will, more subjection to his authority, and more submission to his rod. I acknowledge thee, O holy-making Spirit, to be the teacher of patience, and what I have learned was thy revelation. It was in thy strength that I was enabled to go on with any quietness bearing my cross. Thy grace made me willing, and nothing else can keep me willing, to have the flesh crucified with its affections and lusts. O God, put forth thine almighty power, and enable me to part with every thing which would hinder my fellowship with the Father and the Son. I desire so to walk this day, as to have growing fellowship with the eternal Three, and I desire it through thine influence. O God the Holy Ghost, carry on thy work. Exalt and purify my faith and patience and every grace: if it be thy will to do this under the cross, O make me willing and able to bear it. Let every cross bring forth richer and riper fruit, until thou give me an exceeding great and eternal harvest of glory. I ask this in the name of Jesus, and I expect an answer of grace through the Father's love in him, to whom with thee, O blessed Spirit, three persons in one godhead, be equal glory, worship, and praise, now and for ever. Amen.

Meditate, O my soul, with seriousness, upon this great subject. Study the Scripture account of the cross. The knowledge of it enters into the very essence of the peace and comfort of thy walk. Thou canst not run away from the cross: *thou canst* not cast it off: remember if thou will be Christ's

disciple, thou must take it up daily and follow him. If it be very heavy and very grievous, yet it will not hinder thee from following him. He carried the heaviest part for thee—he endured the curse and punishment due to thy sins—he left no wrath for thee to suffer: blessed be his love, the cross has no curse in it now, thy sufferings are all sent from love, and his love will help thee to bear them, and to profit by them: for he has promised to bless and sanctify them to his people. And he makes them a blessing indeed. Never, on this side of heaven, does he give them such near and happy communion with himself, as under the cross. O read, then, and study what is revealed in Scripture concerning it. Go over it again and again. Learn well, and inwardly digest, the doctrine of the cross of Christ—the necessity—the benefit—the blessings of it: Meditate and feed upon the sweet promises relating to it: mix faith with them, that they may nourish and strengthen thee in time of need. But never forget, that thy cross, be it what it will, is appointed for thee in covenant-love. It is the portion allotted thee by thy heavenly Father—decreed, in weight and measure to an atom—thou shalt not bear it one moment longer than he has determined—and many precious fruits it shall produce. Thou wilt find suffering times, growing times—growth in faith and patience, in mortification to sin, and in fellowship with the ever-blessed Trinity. The author of thy faith puts it to the trial: it comes out of the lion's den unhurt: it comes out of the fiery furnace refined. God is glorified hereby, and thou art strengthened. He sends the cross to teach thee patience, and he continues it for the exercise and for the improvement of the same grace. He intends by his chastening to crucify the flesh, and to mortify thy members which are upon the earth. In love he takes away sensual, that he may give thee spiritual joys. He does not hate thee, but love guides every stroke of his chastening. He is only weakening thine attachment to earthly things, that he may increase thy communion with Father, Son, and Spirit. O what blessings are these! Meditate, O my soul, much and often upon them. Pray for the experience of them in time of need; and be assured, with all these helps, the cross will be exercised hard enough for thy patience. Thou canst carry it only in the strength of almighty grace. May the Lord strengthen thee from day to day to run the race set before thee, till thou win the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

CHAP. VI.

The believer, exercised with the inward cross, learns to walk more humbly with his God.

THE outward cross is not always a burden alike heavy. God gives his children a little respite. After they have been long tried he sometimes removes their trouble, and gives them ease and outward prosperity. Their sun arises as it does in nature. After many cold and dark days, a fine season comes —finer for coming after them. The sky grows clear and serene, the air is soft and refreshing, the sun shines with warm and enlivening rays. Every thing looks pleasant and smiles around you. So it is in the kingdom of grace. The believer may not be always in heaviness through manifold afflictions. He has his times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. He prospers, and is in health. The blessing of God is upon his substance. Every thing that he takes in hand succeeds. He is happy in his circumstances, and happy in his family. He sees the goodness of God in these mercies, and he is thankful. But if the heavenly Father sometimes indulge his children with the removal of the outward cross; yet he never does with the inward. They carry it all their days, and a heavy burden it is. So long as they are in the body, while they are in this tabernacle, they do groan being burdened: for

The *inward cross* is the fault and corruption of sinful nature, which doth remain in the regenerate, and is their continual grief and plague; because it is always opposing their holy and happy walk with God. It is called in Scripture,

The flesh, the whole man being carnal and full of lusting against the Spirit.

The old man, being the first in us before the new man is created by the Spirit of regeneration.

A body of sin, made up completely of members and appetites, in which there is not only an absence of all good, but also a propensity to all evil, insomuch that nothing can move or stir in this body, but what is sinful.

The law of sin, because sin rules and governs the natural man.

Indwelling sin, because it dwells in the whole man, both in soul and body.

Concupiscence or lust, which the apostle says, he should not have known to be sin, unless the law had said—Thou shalt not covet or lust.

This fallen nature is also said to be corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, to be contrary to the Spirit, to rebel against the law of God, and not to be subject to it, neither indeed can be. This corruption of nature doth remain, according to our reformers, Art. 9. 'Yea, in them that are regenerated, whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek *froneema sarkos*, which some do expound, the wisdom; some, sensuality; some, the affection; some, the desire of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God; and although there is no condemnation for them that believe, and are baptized, yet the apostle doth confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.' And in the 15th Art. of Christ alone without sin, they say, 'that all we, the rest, although baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.'

The compilers of our articles were holy men, and taught of God. They spake his mind and will according to the oracles of truth. And it will be a great comfort to a poor soldier, wearied with fighting against those lusts which war against the soul, to find that the best Christians, in every age, have been engaged in the same holy war. This will mightily encourage him to take to him the whole armour of God, that he may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Attend then, O my soul, to the law and to the testimony. Pray for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Desire grace to submit to the truth of God, that whatever he teaches plainly and expressly in his word, thou mayest believe it, and abide by it. Read and pray, till thou art satisfied, and the conviction of thy mind influence thy heart and walk. Art thou to carry the inward cross all the way to heaven? Is there no discharge in this war?—No truce to be made, not even a cessation of arms? But art thou to be fighting on the good fight of faith, till the Captain of thy salvation take thee out of the field of battle? O hard service! To be night and day—at home and abroad—in the closet and in the church—at hearing the word and meditating upon it—fasting and praying—at the shop and at the exchange—every where and at all times forced to be in arms against the assaults of indwelling sin; this is a warfare terrible indeed to flesh and blood. The length of it—never ended so long as breath is in the body. The painfulness of it—consisting in being at war with a man's self, and in resisting his bosom sins and strongest appetites. What discouragements are these from entering into, and from con-

tinuing in, this battle! Why should it be wondered then, that some persons, who only follow the camp, and are not of it, should repent when they see this war, and return to Egypt? or that others, pretending to be on Christ's side, but never one with him, should dream of shaking off this cross, and of sitting down here in a land of perfect peace? This is the coward's paradise. They want to rest quiet on this side of Jordan, and would not go over with Jesus to fight for the promised land. O dear Saviour, keep thy noble army from this delusion of Satan: so long as they are in the body of sin and death, make them good soldiers of Christ Jesus, resisting unto blood, striving against sin. For so long must we be in this hot battle. It is decreed by the sovereign will of God—and he is always of one mind. He has revealed it in his word of truth, that the corruption of nature doth remain in his regenerate children; they have an old man and a new, they have flesh and spirit, they have nature and grace, and he has described the combat, which is to last through life between these two. The beloved apostle bears a clear testimony. He is speaking of those whom the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and who had fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and who proved the truth of this by their walking in the light; he puts himself among them, and declares; 'If we say that we have no sin *now*, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.'—If we say,—he saith not, if *thou* say, as if he spake of some particular person—nor if *ye* say, as if he intended ordinary Christians alone. But if *we*, apostles, or whatever we be, say so; if any of us, if I, for instance, should think I had no sin now, who am a saint of a hundred years old; because I was a great favourite of the Lord Christ, and have been a great sufferer for him: or because I have lived blameless before men, and have been a witness for the truth in my writings, and am ready to seal it with my blood: if upon account of any thing done by me, or in me, of any real excellency or attainment, I should fancy myself in a state of sinless perfection, the Holy Ghost charges me with self-deceit. A dreadful delusion! arising from the pride of my heart, and its rebellion against God, and discovering the most gross ignorance of God's righteousness in the holy law, and of Christ's righteousness in the glorious gospel; but if I was to say, as well as to think it; if I should tell any body—Now I have no sin, I am perfect—Now, at this time, I have received perfect purity of heart; for, ever since I received it, I have had nothing stirring in me for one year, for two, twenty, forty years, but love, pure

love to God—God is in all my thoughts, and nothing but God —I do his will in earth as it is done in heaven: if I should say so, I should tell a great lie: for I should deceive myself, and the truth would not be in me.

Are these indeed the very words of the apostle: 'If we say that we have no sin now, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us?' Can no other sense be fairly put upon them, but that the holy John had sin in him at every given moment of his life? Is this the plain literal meaning of the passage? As it certainly is, observe then, O my soul, the decisive evidence given here by the Holy Ghost concerning the inward cross. Pray for his teaching, that thou mayest understand, and pray for his grace, that thou mayest profit from this scripture. Here is his infallible record concerning St. John and all highly-favoured believers. He asserts that there was no time of their lives in which they were free from indwelling sin: God forbid then that I should think I have no sin. He avers that if they should say they had none, they were deceived; and that if they should stand to it, as popish mystics and protestant perfectionists do, the searcher of hearts declares that they lie, and do not the truth—the truth is not in them; for the father of lies has flattered them, and drawn them into self-idolatry, with a wicked design to corrupt their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ. Beware, O my soul, of this deceit! the Holy Ghost has warned thee of it. He foresaw how the first sin would break out in after-times, and pride would persuade men that they were perfect in the flesh; he, therefore, so guarded this Scripture that none can mistake it, but such as turn away their ears from the truth. He puts all the words in the present tense, lest any should think he was speaking of time past, or of what men were before the blood of Christ had cleansed them. If we now say—We, who now have fellowship with the blessed Trinity, and are walking in the light of their countenance—say that *we now have no sin*, nor had none formerly; he is not speaking of that: if he was (the Holy Ghost understands grammar, and can make no mistake in expressing himself,) he would certainly have used the past tense; but he uses the present, *now have no sin*, so as not to want the cleansing blood of Jesus this moment as much as ever—If we have any such thoughts, *we now deceive ourselves, and the truth is not now in us.* How forcible and strong is this testimony from the mouth of John! and the sense, as well as the grammar, shews that he is speaking of believers, and that there is sin in them: for throughout the chapter he treats

of the very same persons, and describes, not what they were before, but what they are since, they received the grace of God. They were cleansed from all sin by the blood of the Lamb; were admitted into communion with the Father and the Son, by the Spirit; and they enjoyed this communion, walking in the light, as God is in the light: these are the persons here mentioned, of whom God says, they had sin still in them, indwelling sin, the fault and corruption of nature, still remained in them; and if they fancied it did not, they would be sadly deceived—they would entirely mistake the covenant of grace, which was to bring sinners, sensible of their wants and miseries, to live out of themselves upon the fulness of the God-man—they would forget their own character, under which alone they can be saved, salvation being only for sinners—they would fall into the crime of the devil, by pride exalting themselves against the person and work of the incarnate God—and they would quite pervert the law and the gospel: for, in order to maintain their inherent perfection, they are forced to legalize the gospel, and to make it consist of certain terms and conditions, upon the performance of which sinners shall be saved: and then, in order to comfort themselves with their having performed these terms and conditions, they are forced to turn rank antinomians: they lessen the evil of sin, they excuse it in themselves, and make just nothing of it. They call it by several pretty soft names, such as infirmity, frailty, excresence, and at last they get quite rid of it, by laying it upon the devil, and by terming it an injection of old Satan. And thus they deceive themselves into perfection, and insist upon it that they have no sin, although they have enough in them to damn the whole world. O God, open the eyes of these self-deceivers, and bring them into the way of truth.

Such is the clear evidence of the Holy Spirit: he asserts that the greatest believers, while in the body, have sin in them. Dost thou yield, O my soul, to his testimony? Art thou fully convinced of it from the work of his grace, as well as from the word of his truth? Dost thou feel indwelling sin? Is it the plague of thy heart, and the burden of thy life? When thou art willing to walk humbly with thy God, is it continually in thy way, raising objections, putting difficulties, and suggesting hinderances? Is it like a heavy weight pressing thee down in thy race, that thou canst not run so long, or so fast, as thou couldst wish? Since this is indeed thy daily cross, and the bearing of it the hardest part of thy warfare, O read

with diligence the Scripture account of it. Take notice of the Lord's champions, how they felt under this burden, from whence they derived strength to bear it, and had comfort under it. Hear the man after God's own heart, crying out, 'Mine iniquities are gone over my head, as a heavy burden: they are too heavy for me.'—David had a heavy load: he was ready to sink, and he could not cast it off. He could not go into his closet, or to the house God; he could not sit upon his throne, or go in and out before his family, but this grievous cross so bowed him down greatly, that he went mourning all the day long. The burden of it was intolerable, and would have crushed him under it, if he had not learned how to cast it on the Lord—'Make haste (says he,) to help me, O Lord God of my salvation!' Here he found relief. The prayer of faith was heard, and God was the strength of his salvation.

Under the same burden a New Testament saint went groaning all his days. He had a hard conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, and he has left the account of it upon record. Blessed be God for the seventh chapter of the Romans. We there read of the inward cross, with which all the children of God are exercised. In the very same Paul there was delight in the law of God after the inward man; but he found another law in his members, rebelling against the law of God—the flesh, in which dwelleth no good thing, never ceased to assault the spirit with its vile thoughts, legal workings, and rebellious inclinations—when he had a will to do good, he could not do it so perfectly as he desired—his best moments were never free from the inroads of indwelling sin: therefore, in the bitterness of his soul, he cried out: 'O wretched man that I am.' Oh! that sigh came from the bottom of his heart. I know what he felt—he groaned, being burdened—weary and tired with this continual conflict, he looked out for deliverance. 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' He saw, by faith, his almighty Saviour; and in him expected everlasting victory: 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' He rested upon Christ in the battle, and through him waited for deliverance, knowing that, one day, he should be made more than conqueror.

Well then, O my soul, here is comfort. If the corruption of nature be thy cross, so it was to David, and so it was to Paul. Thy case is not singular. It is common to every soldier who is fighting under the banner of Christ. This cross is unavoidable, because it is in thy bosom. It is thine inmost self—thy whole nature, which is corrupt according to the de-

ceitful lusts. Thou hast not an atom of thy body, nor the least motion or stirring of any faculty in thy soul, but sin is in it; and therefore it is capable of being a plague to the new man. The Holy Ghost speaks thus of the inward warfare: 'This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh: for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.' These words are addressed to the Galatians, who were believers, and called into the liberty of the gospel, but by false teaching they were under a great temptation. They had begun in the Spirit, but they thought of being perfected in the flesh. They set out with salvation by faith, but expected salvation, at last, by works. Among other arguments to convince them of their mistake, here is one unanswerable, namely, No works of ours can save a sinner, but such as are perfect; no works of ours are perfect, therefore they cannot save a sinner. And that none of them are perfect is certain, because in every one of them there is something of the flesh, of corrupt nature, as well as something of the Spirit and of spiritual nature. These two are contrary as life and death, and they are always in action, every moment the one lusting against the other: so that no believer can do the things which he would, so perfectly as the holy law requires.

How grievous must this inward cross be to a real believer! For it consists in the opposition which he finds within him, to God and to the things of God. The flesh ever lusteth against the Spirit, and the old man against the new. There is a continual war between these contrary powers. The flesh is a complete body of sin, armed with every member and instrument of rebellion, that can resist the motions and actions of the new man. There is darkness in the understanding always, clouding the light of the glorious gospel, and therefore we know but in part. The will of the flesh always opposes the holy will of God. There is enmity in the heart working against the love of God and of his will. There is pride to weaken humility—anger to oppose meekness—the carnal mind to fight against spiritual-mindedness. When the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. When you draw near to God in prayer, the imagination will not be confined: it will wander after a thousand vain objects. When you are hearing the word, it will disturb your attention with its unaccountable excursions. It is so sportive and flighty that you cannot keep it within any bounds. Is it not so, O my soul? Art thou not sensible of

this heavy cross? Dost thou not find something in thee always resisting and weakening the exercise of thy graces? and is not this the great plague of thy life? Can there be a greater than to carry about with thee a sinful nature, daily trying to hinder thee in thy holy walk and happy communion with God? O how much does it concern thee, then, to be well skilled in bearing this cross, and in behaving under it as a good soldier of Christ Jesus! And to this end the principles before laid down, are absolutely necessary. Without them thou canst not rightly understand the nature of indwelling sin, and canst not possibly gain victory over it. Only the doctrines of grace, received into thy heart, can enable thee to walk with God under this cross. Call to mind, then, what was agreed upon in the covenant of the Trinity, and was fulfilled in the person and work of Immanuel, for thy peace with the Father, and for thy returning to him in love, and has been applied to thee by the Holy Spirit, who has given thee faith in Jesus, and has manifested the love of the Father in him: thou art therefore now one with thy covenant-head—in him complete and perfect, although thou art in thyself still a sinner. Thou hast a body of sin, through the lusting of which thou art not able to keep the holy law, according to its full demands, in any one instance. But thou art before the Father, what thy Surety is. He sees thee in him, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing—accepted as he is—beloved with the same love—looked upon with the same joy—and blessed with all spiritual blessings in him. Thy Surety lived for thee: thou hast the righteousness of God for thy justification. Thy Surety died for thee: in him thou art as truly dead unto sin, as Christ himself is. Thy Surety rose again, and took possession of spiritual and eternal life for thee. He was delivered for thine offences, and raised again for thy justification. Thou shalt reign with him, as certainly as he has now the crown upon his own head. Such is the perfect salvation which is for thee, although thou art still the subject of sin: for thy pardon is without exception or reverse.—All trespasses are freely forgiven. Thy justification to life is absolute: for it is God himself that justifieth. He chose thee in Jesus, that thou shouldst be holy and without blame before him—and so thou art. As a member in his body thou art without blemish. Here is thy relief under the inward cross. The Father chose thee in his Son, looks upon thee in him, and deals with thee according to covenant love: there is therefore, now no condemnation to thee, who art in Christ Jesus. With the sweet sense of this

upon thy conscience, persuaded that God is at peace with thee, take up the inward cross. In this delightful view see the curse removed. Thou hast no reason to fear wrath or death or hell. Victory over all sins and enemies is certain. Daily, eternal victory is promised. In this faith follow the noble army who carried this cross to their graves. Fight as they did, looking unto Jesus. Sin is in thee: it was in them; but they looked upon it as a vanquished foe, slain and put to death when Jesus died for sin once. Likewise reckon thou also thyself to be in him dead unto sin—freed from the condemning sentence of the law—freed from the dreadful stroke of justice by his death—freed as truly as he is—and therefore thou art no more liable than he is to be condemned and punished. And, for the strengthening of this faith, seek for fellowship with him in his death. It is thy privilege, as thou art planted in the likeness of his death, to derive power and efficacy from it, daily to put sin to death. The more steadfastly thou believest that thou art one with him in his death, the more wilt thou find thy sinful nature crucified with him. Communion is always according to the faith of union with Christ. The strongest faith must have the strongest hold of him, and thereby draw the most virtue from him. It is true, as our faith increases we become more spiritual; and we see corruption more, as we see motes in the sun-beams. The senses of the new man, by exercise, gain a quicker perception of sin—we become all over tender as the eye—jealous of the motions—yea, of the appearance of evil. This is real growth. Sin is more felt, in order that the power of Jesus may be put forth to make us hate it, resist it, and overcome it more. As believers are more sensible of their sinfulness in the first Adam, so they grow up into the second Adam, the Lord from heaven: they bear the cross of the corruption of the first, which leads them to constant fellowship with the second—in his death, for the pardon of their corruption—in the power of his death to mortify sin, that it may not have dominion over them.

Corruption is in thee, and it will strive for dominion. Thy sins will sometimes fiercely assault. Their allies, the world and the devil, will join them with stratagems and force; when the battle is hot, and thou art weak, then it behoves thee to live by faith upon Jesus as thy surety, now acting for thee in heaven, as he acted for thee upon earth. He has gone up, as thy high-priest, to carry thy name within the veil. He bears it upon the ephod on his shoulders, and upon the breastplate on his heart: his power and his love are engaged for thee now

he is in glory. He stands in the presence of God, as thy representative. The Father sees thee in him; and thou art in his sight what thy forerunner is. As he stands there, so dost thou stand—righteous as he is righteous—holy as he is holy—beloved as he is beloved—and shalt be blessed as he is blessed. View, by faith, thy nature in him, exalted and glorified, and for the joy set before thee in him take up thy cross. It is a heavy burden—it is a hard warfare. True: but consider, who shall lay any thing to thy charge for indwelling sin? It is God that justifieth thee from it. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that has risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for thee. He appears in the presence of God for thee as thine intercessor. He is always in court to represent thy person, and to carry thy cause, especially as to what concerns sin: 'If any of us sin,' says the beloved disciple, 'we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins;' in this office he is skilful and faithful and compassionate. He has thine interest at heart—thy safety, thy comfort, under this cross, and thy victory over it. His very glory is so interwoven with thine, that they are one: yea, the Advocate and his clients form but one spiritual body, of which every member is what the Head is. O my God and Saviour, I bless thee and worship thee, for acting for me as mine advocate and intercessor in heaven. Increase, I beseech thee, my faith, that I may see more of the glory of thine office, and may make more use of it in the bearing of mine inward cross. O let thy faithful witness abide with me, to enable me, without doubt or wavering, to trust in what thou hast done for me upon earth, and to draw comfort from what thou art now doing for me in heaven. Into thy hands I desire to commit my cause. Lord, undertake for me. Be surety for thy servant for good, and guide me with thy counsel, till thou bring me to thy glory. I ask this for thy mercies' sake. Amen. Is this the true state of the case? Is it certain from the word of God? Is it confirmed from matter of fact? Did the highest believer upon earth experience their inward cross? When his conscience summoned him to the bar of God, and put him upon inquiring what he would plead there for his justification, had he any thing to urge but the sacrifice and righteousness of the ever-blessed Immanuel? And is not this thy plea, O my soul? Dost thou not find so much weakness and infirmity in thy holy things, that thou wouldst seek atonement for the iniquity of them through the intercession of the great

High-priest? And thou wouldst not think of standing before the throne, to claim eternal life as the reward due to thine own holiness. Is not this thine experience? If it be, then take up thy cross in this

Faith. It is thy grief that sin is in thee. The motions and lustings of it are thy burden. The resisting and opposing them is thy continual warfare; and thou hast no prospect before thee of enjoying perfect deliverance from this heavy cross, until death release thee. Blessed be God for the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. There is a provision made in the covenant of grace for the pardon of indwelling sin, for victory over it daily, and for the eternal destruction of the whole body of sin: it shall have no existence in the members, any more than it has in their glorified Head. Here is a comfort for thee, O my soul, of God's own providing, and of God's own applying. When it is applied to thy heart, the cross will be easy. Observe carefully what is revealed concerning the being of sin in the best Christians, and concerning the pardon of it. The Holy Ghost declares it dwells in them, but they are forgiven all trespasses—they are in Christ without spot or wrinkle or any such thing—in the first Adam they are heirs of sin, death, and hell; in the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, they are heirs of righteousness, life, and glory. He is their covenant-head, and they are before God what he is. This is the record of truth—ye are *complete in him.* Abide by it, O my soul; give it full credit; and boldly plead it against all the charges of guilt, and fears of wrath.

'It is true, I have sin in me, but it is pardoned. God has forgiven me *all* trespasses. I stand before him in my Surety, who undertook for me, and I am perfect in him. The Father chose me in his Son: he looks upon the face of his Beloved, and sees me in him. In him he is well-pleased, so he is with me. As he loves him, so he loves me. This is the glorious privilege which by faith I now enjoy. I deny sight and sense, and I stick to the word of God. I adhere strictly to its testimony concerning me, believing myself to be dead indeed unto sin in Christ, and in him absolutely freed from guilt and condemnation. The Father is at peace with me, and he loves me in his Son, and with the same love with which he loves him—his Father and my Father. With this persuasion I go to war with my corruptions. 'I see their traitorous designs. They are fighting against every thing that is dear and precious to my soul. But having the promised grace of the almighty Saviour for my help, I desire to set upon them in his name. I

know he has them among mine other enemies under his feet, and I have his word for it that he will put them under mine. Yea, Lord, I believe, and on thy faithful promise I trust this day. Although I must carry my cross, yet I bless thee and worship thee for removing curse and wrath from it. I can now take it up as thy soldier, and fight against it in thy strength, expecting victory from thee, and to thy glory. O my God, save me from indwelling sin. Let me feel it my burden. Glorify thy grace in me, and by me, that being endued with power from on high, I may hold out resisting and conquering it, till thou give me everlasting victory.'

If this, O my soul, be thy constant dependence, then the cross will become light. Guilt makes it heavy: the curse in it makes it intolerable: but if by faith thou canst see guilt and curse removed, then it will be no hinderance to thee in thy heavenly walk, but will daily call forth into use and exercise those graces which will help thee forward, and especially

Patience. Here is great need of patience—a continual war—and within thee—thine own bosom, the seat of it—and thine own lusts carrying it on, and maintaining it. The more spiritual thou art, the more wilt thou feel this inward conflict. The more thou growest into Christ, the more will thy corruption stir and move—they will be thy continual plague, so that thou wilt not be able to draw any comfort from what thou art in thyself. Here is exercise for patience. Every where indwelling sin is present with thee; upon every temptation ready with its flatteries to entice, and with its power to break out into act and deed. The opposing it is like cutting off a right hand, and plucking out a right eye—as contrary to nature, and as painful. The hand and the eye cannot be destroyed twice; but inbred lusts, overcome a thousand times, are not in the least discouraged from warring against the soul. Like the troubled sea, never at rest, they are always casting up some sinful mire and dirt. What canst thou do without faith in the Redeemer's blood, without patience to wait for the Redeemer's strength? Every moment there is need of faith and patience; and every moment, if these graces be exercised, they will be improved. The bearing of the cross continually, and fighting under it on the side of God, will also be the means of teaching thee

The true spiritual mortification, which does not consist in sin not being in thee, nor in its being put upon the cross daily, nor yet in its being kept upon it. There must be something

more to establish perfect peace in thy conscience; and that is the testimony of God concerning the body of sin. He has provided for thy perfect deliverance from it in Christ. Every thing needful for this purpose was finished by him upon the cross. He was thy surety. He suffered for thee. Thy sins were crucified with him, and nailed to his cross. They were put to death when he died: for he was thy covenant-head, and thou, as a member of his body, was legally represented by him, and art indeed dead to sin by his dying to sin once. The law has now no more right to condemn thee, a believer, than it has to condemn him. Justice is bound to deal with thee as it has with thy risen and ascended Saviour. If thou dost not thus see thy complete mortification in him, sin will reign in thee. No sin can be crucified, either in heart or life, unless it be first pardoned in conscience: because there will be want of faith to receive the strength of Jesus, by whom alone it can be crucified. If it be not mortified in its guilt, it cannot be subdued in its power. If the believer does not see his perfect deadness to sin in Jesus, he will open a wide door to unbelief: and if he be not persuaded of his completeness in Christ, he gives room for the attacks of self-righteous and legal tempers. If Christ be not all in all, self must still be looked upon as something great, and there will be food left for the pride of self-importance and self-sufficiency. So that he cannot grow into the death of Christ, in sensible experience, farther than he believes himself to be dead to sin in Christ. The more clearly and steadfastly he believes this, as the apostle did—'I am crucified with Christ,' in proportion will he cleave to Christ, and receive from him greater power to crucify sin. This believing view of his absolute mortification in Christ is the true gospel method of mortifying sin in our own persons.

Examine then, O my soul, the mistakes which thou hast made, and the temptation which thou art under, concerning this leading truth in thy walk. Pray to thy God for his wisdom to guide thee. Without it thou wilt be afraid where no fear is. Thou wilt be inclined to think this doctrine rather encouraging to sin: because it seems, to carnal reason, to take off thy mind from watchfulness against it, and from praying for victory over it. But be assured this is a great error. If thou art not complete in Christ, thou never canst be complete. Seek for the death of sin where thou wilt, it is not to be found but in his death. Try to conquer it upon any other principle than faith in his death, the very attempt is sinful, and proves

thee to be under the law. Unless thou art one with him in his death, there can be no pardon of sin, and consequently no victory over it. O fear not then to lay the whole weight of thy salvation upon Jesus. Depend on him, as dying to sin for thee, and look at thyself dead to sin in him—as completely dead to it as he is. Read the testimony of the Holy Spirit. Study the infinite, the everlasting sufficiency of his death for thine absolute freedom from guilt and condemnation. Trust without wavering; be not afraid to view the everlasting perfection of thy deliverance in Jesus, and this will weaken the tyranny and will crucify the power of sin. This will, and nothing else can. Read the sixth of the Romans, and pray for the Spirit of revelation to open it to thee. There thou wilt discover the true way to mortify sin. It is by believing that thou art planted together with Christ in his death: from thence only thy pardon flows, from thence thy daily victory is received, and from thence thy eternal victory will be perfected. Fight on; soon thou shalt be what Christ now is. The member shall be perfectly like the Head. O glorious prospect! Thou shalt be with him, and like him—spotless and fair as Jesus, righteous and holy, happy in body and soul. Thou shalt see him as he is, and, awaking after his likeness, thou shalt be satisfied with it. Take up thy cross for the joy here set before thee. Bear it in faith. It will be light and easy to thy pardoned conscience: yea, the carrying of it in patience will bring forth many peaceable fruits of righteousness: amongst the rest there is one, which in the sight of God is of great price, and which is daily improved by the inward cross; namely,

Humility, which consists in the right knowledge of ourselves, not only of what we have been, but also of what we now are. The best and holiest man upon the earth, has a corrupt fallen nature: he has flesh still, which is always lusting against the Spirit. While he is alive to God he feels it. He is sensible of the inward conflict. Dead men indeed feel nothing. A dead corpse has no sense of the worms which are eating it up. He that has these lusts in him, and warring against his soul, and yet does not feel them, cannot be spiritually alive. A natural man has no sense of them, because they are in him as worms in a dead body; just so it is with the perfectionist. But so soon and so long, as he lives to God, he will perceive them. If he be in happy communion with God, indwelling sin is present to interrupt the enjoyment. If he exercise any grace, this besetting sin tries to weaken its

actings. If it be set about any duty, it will hinder him from doing it so perfectly as God requires, and as he could wish. The abiding sense of these truths will keep down pride. The believer will see nothing of his own to trust in: no faith, or hope, or love, no faithfulness to grace, no holy obedience; all is stained or polluted. He is forced to cry out of his best duties—*unclean, unclean.* In this school the disciple learns to walk humbly with his God. The more he knows of himself, the more humble he becomes. And he grows in this heavenly grace, the more he is acquainted with the mercy of God in Jesus. This, learned by divine teaching, keeps the believer meek and lowly in his own eyes. Nothing softens and melts the soul into holy tenderness like the sense of God's mercy. A man who feels the plague of his own heart, is never truly humbled until he is pardoned. But when he is justified from all things in Christ, in him a partaker of all spiritual blessings in earth and heaven; when he sees all his salvation of grace, of free sovereign grace, flowing from the absolute favour of electing love, and bestowing upon him, as unworthy an object as ever did or ever can partake of it, then he becomes truly broken-hearted. These truths, taught of God, bring every high thought into subjection to Christ Jesus. The soul bows before him, lies low at his feet, prostrates itself before the throne of his grace, and desires to be kept willing to take all its blessings out of his hands, and to use them to his glory. This is gospel humility, the true abasement of spirit, with which a man, sensible that he is saved by mere mercy, loathes himself. And while the experience of indwelling sin humbles him down to the dust, it produces, through God's grace, the happiest effects; for it keeps him in his strong tower and sanctuary, in which alone he is

Safe. It is ever reminding him of the need of the blood of sprinkling—ever shewing him his want of a perfect righteousness—and ever preaching to him the necessity of his being kept by the power of God. And while he hearkens to these lessons, trusting to Jesus, he will stand fast, and be established. The arm of the Lord God Almighty will hold him up, and he shall be safe. While he lives thus out of himself, the sense of indwelling sin will lead him to his true

Happiness. Which is all in the fulness of the God-man. He will enjoy the more of this, the less he finds in himself. When he cannot draw comfort from any thing of his own, he will seek it more in God. When all the streams are dried up, he will get nearer to the fountain-head, and live more upon

it. This is the portion of the Lord's people, and the inheritance of all his saints. And in this view, indwelling sin is made the means of promoting their

Holiness. They see their continual need of Christ. They can do nothing without him; but, believing their oneness with him, they desire to improve it in experience. Every thing they do keeps them sensible of their sins and wants, and shews them the necessity of living by the faith of the Son of God. This is true humility. The more they are humbled, the more they receive out of the fulness of Jesus: for he giveth more grace—more, to produce nearer fellowship with him in his death, whereby sin will be more dead, and in his resurrection, whereby the soul will be more alive to God. So that the humblest believer is the nearest to God: and is the safest, happiest, and holiest of all the men upon earth; because he has most fellowship with God. He dwells in God, and God in him. Meditate, O my soul, upon this use of the cross. Is sin in thee? Dost thou feel it, and art thou fighting against it? And does not this humble thee? Art thou freely forgiven all trespasses, indwelling sin among the rest? Dost thou know that thou art a saved sinner, a brand plucked out of hell? and does not this humble thee? I see reason enough to be humbled, but I feel pride in me lusting against humility. O my precious Jesus, humble me under thy mighty hand. To thee I look for all my salvation. Lord, save me from pride. Thou hast made me willing to be taught of thee to be meek and lowly, and I come to thee, praying that the disciple may be as his Master. O let me drink deep into thy spirit. In every day's warfare against my corruptions, enable me to renounce myself, that I may find thou art carrying both me and my cross. Keep me humbled at thy feet, that thou mayest exalt me in due time. I pray to thee, my precious Saviour, for this grace, to mine eternal humbling, and to thine eternal exaltation. In life and death, and for evermore, I hope to glory only in the Lord, and to triumph in the God of my salvation.

Thus the believer learns to walk humbly under the inward cross. He is brought to trust all in the Saviour's hand. Daily he discovers more of the ruins of the fall, which lead him to fresh discoveries of the perfect salvation in Jesus. If he attend to what is passing in his own breast, he finds his need of a Saviour every moment, and for every thing: by which means he grows in grace, and in the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. He learns to put no confidence in the

flesh: but to rejoice only in his completeness in Jesus, from whom all his comforts and victories are received. Thus, while self is laid low, the Saviour is exalted, and his perfect work is more depended on. The believer, by hope and love, obtains more delightful communion with his God. Indwelling sin is his cross; but he bears it, looking unto Jesus: from whom he receives strength to go on; yea, to run the race set before him. By faith he sees in Jesus the corruption of his nature condemned and dead in law: he beholds himself freed from this, as well as from his other sins. Guilt is the most galling part of this cross; but when guilt is thus removed from the conscience, then the cross grows light. When taken up in faith, and carried in love to the almighty Saviour, then it does not stop the believer in his fellowship with Jesus, or in his happy walk with him. Glory be to thee, my Lord, of this I have some experience. Yes, precious Jesus, I know the infinite value of that sacrifice which put away sin. I bless thee for that offering which perfects for ever. Interested in it, I would not distrust my completeness in thee. Through thy holy nature I expect to be renewed after thy likeness. The fountain for cleansing from the filth of sin stands open; in it I daily wash my spotted soul. In thy divine righteousness I see the law and justice of the Father infinitely honoured by justifying me, and dealing with me as perfectly righteous. Complete in thee I am. In thy work finished upon earth I am perfect, and am represented as such by thee in heaven. I believe thou appearest there as my divine intercessor, bearing my name upon thy shoulders, and upon thy breast, with a glory beyond all the precious stones in the world. O my blessed Jesus, increase this faith. Lead me from faith to faith, that, while I am travelling heavenwards, mine eye and my heart may be more simply fixed upon thee. Come thou glorifier of the Saviour, and discover to me more of the sinfulness of sin, and of my need of his salvation. Holy Spirit, teach me, in the deepest sense of indwelling sin, to trust wholly to the offering of the body of Jesus. O lead me to his cross, there to see all my sins nailed, crucified with him, dead in his death, buried in his grave; in this faith strengthen me mightily to resist and to conquer my corruptions. Enable me to experience the power of his cross, that I may feel sin weakened in the love and in the practice of it. Almighty Spirit, in my daily warfare I find no strength less than thine can make me conqueror; and therein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Awake, awake; put on strength, O arm of the

Lord; awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that cut the pride of nature to pieces, and wounded the old dragon? O my God, magnify thine arm in subduing every sin. Thou seest my naked heart, and its sighings are not hid from thee. My corruptions are indeed my cross: and they would have been a sore burden, too heavy for me to bear, if the curse had not been taken out of them. But still, pardoned as they are, yet in this tabernacle I do groan, being burdened. I believe the day is coming when I shall have perfect and eternal freedom from sin and sorrow; the first-fruits of this only make me long the more for the blessed harvest. But I desire to wait in hope, bearing my cross, till thy will be done. O Lord, make me willing to resist, give me power to overcome, indwelling sin, till the day of redemption and mortality be swallowed up of life. Hear me, my good God, and answer me, for thy name's sake, to the glory of Father, Son, and Spirit, the three in one Jehovah, to whom my heart now bows in worship, and my soul hopes soon to join in the song of never-ceasing praise. Amen, and Amen.

CHAP. XI.

The believer fights the good fight of faith, and goes forth conquering and to conquer.

When the believer has been disciplined under the cross, and has learned to bear it with patience, the Captain of his salvation has other exercises for him. He has chosen to him a soldier, and he intends to teach him to endure hardness. His life in Christ is one continual battle, not only against flesh and blood, but also against principalities and powers of earth and hell: he cannot discover their stratagems, nor overcome their assaults, but by being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. His warfare is therefore to be carried on entirely by faith. The principles before laid down must be brought into use. What the Spirit of God has discovered to him of his salvation in Jesus is to be tried in every battle; and if it be maintained, it will be improved. If he hold fast the confidence of his faith, he will behave like a good soldier. If he always takes up arms in absolute dependence on the divine General, to give him courage, to order him how to attack his enemies, to bestow strength upon him daily to resist them, then victory will be certain. Yea, he will be invincible while he stands strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

He will meditate upon the principles which he had been taught of God, and will find peace in his own conscience, and joy in his heart, by bringing them into daily experience. His believing views of the warfare to which he is called will be such as these:

I am, through sovereign grace, called to fight under the banner of Jesus. He has not left me to fight as uncertainly, but he has conquered all mine enemies for me, and he has undertaken to conquer them all in me. It is true, I am weak; but my Redeemer is strong; the Lord of hosts is his name. He has saved me from my sins, from the shame and pain of them, from the wicked one, and the wicked world, from the curse of the law, and from the wrath of God. He has given me a divine righteousness for my justification, and in it I am accepted before the throne; he has put it upon me for ornament and defence—it is a garment of salvation, which cannot be lost upon earth, and which will shine with never-fading beauty in heaven. The Father is perfectly reconciled, and loves me with a love that passes knowledge. I believe it. God is on my side: I need not fear what any enemy can do unto me. He has taken me into his protection. By his all-wise counsel I am guided: by his almighty arm I am defended. My battles are the Lord's. Indeed, mine enemies are many, and they are too cunning and too mighty for me. But why do they now fight against me? Is it not because God is my friend? They hate me, because he loves me. While I lived in friendship with them, and was at war with God, they were always trying to make me happy: but ever since I fled to Jesus for refuge, and sought redemption in his blood, they have taken up arms against me; and they have raged more furiously since I was enabled to believe in him. But I have no reason to fear their opposition. With them is an arm of flesh, but with me is the Lord my God to help me, and to fight my battles. I may therefore go to my daily warfare in faith, regarding the commands, waiting for the fulfilling of the promises of my God, and relying upon the provision which he has made for my present and for mine eternal victory.

Are thy meditations, O my soul, like these upon the Christian warfare? Examine thyself. If thou art at peace with God, thou must expect war: it is unavoidable. If it be in thy heart to please him, who hath chosen thee to be a soldier, then all the powers of wickedness will be in arms. Night and day, with never-ceasing rage, they will pursue thee. Deep-laid plans will be formed, and fierce assaults will be made against

thy true happiness. They will be attempting, so long as thou art in the world, by some cunning or force, to draw thee from thy God. Thy life, from henceforth, is to be one continued battle. Thy victory depends every moment upon holding fast thy confidence in God: and therefore thou must bring the principles of the doctrine of Christ into exercise. Thou hast seen how necessary they are for every step of thy walk, and thou wilt find them equally necessary for every part of thy warfare. This is a leading truth: thine enemies are God's enemies. Once thou didst join with them and wast on their side fighting against God; but he has saved thee from the guilt of thy rebellion. In free love he chose thee in his Son, and in sovereign mercy gave him for thee. The Son rejoiced to do his Father's will for thy salvation: he did it in his life; he suffered it in his death. The ever-glorious work is finished; and it is given thee on the behalf of Christ to believe. The Lord the Spirit has satisfied thy conscience, and has comforted thy heart with the knowledge of this perfect salvation. The Father is thy father in Jesus—thine by his own free-gift—thine by his own unchangeable purpose—and now thine by thy free choice. He has made thee willing in the day of his power to take him for thy God. He is perfectly reconciled unto thee in his Son: and should not this perfectly reconcile thee to him? His love to thee is wonderful in all its properties, in its rise and origin, and its free and full communication of every covenant blessing. And does not the belief of this engage thy heart in love to God? Dost thou not love him for his love to thee, and is it not thy daily prayer that thy love may abound yet more and more? Has not the sense of this peace and love been improved in thy daily walk with him? Hast thou not found the truth, and enjoyed the comfort, of these graces in thine experience? O fear not then since God is on thy side—fear not, O my soul, to go to war with any enemy, who would rob thee of the peace of God in thy conscience, or of the love of God in thy heart. This is the design of all those who fight against thee. They want to shake thy confidence in God, and so to draw thee from him. They know they cannot succeed while thou standest strong in the Lord, trusting to his being thy reconciled God and loving Father. O keep this trust in him, as the apple of thine eye—bind it continually to thy heart in love—and fight for it as for thy precious life. Be assured no enemies can prevail against thee, until they have first overcome thy faith: because while thou makest God thy refuge and strength, his almighty arm

will be thy defence. 'Be not afraid,' says he, 'I am with thee, and I will keep thee by my power, through faith, unto salvation.'

In this warfare, it is the chief business of the believer to have respect to the orders given him. He is entirely to depend on the Captain of his salvation. What has he said, O my soul, to encourage thee to go to battle without fear? Mind his description—it is the good fight of faith in which thou art engaged. By faith thou art to attack thy foes; by faith alone thou canst conquer them; and faith must have his *Commands*, or else it can have no lawful warrant to fight, and no just ground to expect victory. Indeed, if he had spoken nothing there could have been no faith; for his word comes first—it is spoken—it is heard—and then faith comes by hearing. Look well then to his word. Study it carefully. If thou obey it aright, thou art absolutely safe in the hottest battle; and thy victory is as certain as if the crown was already upon thy head. These are his standing orders: 'Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not afraid, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded; they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shall not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought: for the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee—Fear not, I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.' Are these indeed the words of God? Does he command poor worms, weak and defenceless, to go to war without fear? Does he encourage them to look up to his arm, promising to be on their side? Yes, the Lord of hosts fights for them. All their enemies are his, and therefore they may safely trust, and not be afraid. O my soul, read carefully, read again and again, mark and inwardly digest every word of this divine command; and in obedience to it expect his help. Face thine enemies, whoever they be, with holy boldness: for God is with thee. He has undertaken to fight thy battles. Look at this scripture. Canst thou meditate on it, and yet be afraid? Of whom, or of what? O vile unbelieving fear! beg of God to save thee from it. Honour the Captain of thy salvation. Trust him. Doubt not but thou art as safe, obeying his orders; and expecting his

help, as almighty power can make thee. Observe the courage of one of thy fellow-soldiers. Observe his victory: 'when I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies be turned back: this I know, for God is on my side. In God will I praise his word; in the Lord will I praise his word: in God I have put my trust, I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.' The enemies of David came to swallow him up, but he encouraged himself in the Lord his God. He attended to his orders. He considered the word which was spoken to him, he depended upon it, and had reason to praise God for his faithfulness: for God fulfilled it unto him. There was in it a

Promise, as well as a command—Do this—and I will be with thee. The promise is always made good to them who keep the command in faith. The one is our divine warrant to fight, the other is our encouragement to fight in certain hopes of victory. Attend, O my soul, to the promise, and fear not the accomplishment of it: 'In righteousness shalt thou be established; thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear, and from terror, for it shall not come near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee, shall fall for thy sake. Behold I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work, and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise in judgment against thee thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.' Thou art here forewarned of thine enemies: they shall gather against thee. But the Lord is not with them. He is thy defender and mighty deliverer, and he will bring all opposition to nought for thy sake. However numerous their hosts may be, yet they shall fall. Whatever weapons of war they may form, yet none of them shall prosper. This is the certain heritage of all believers. Their righteousness and their strength is of me, saith the Lord—I will fight their battles, and I will never leave them nor forsake them: I will make them daily conquerors: and behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised them, I will make them more than conquerors.

Is this, O my soul, the infallible word of promise? Has the Lord of hosts undertaken to stand by his people? Has he engaged to lead them out to war by his wisdom, to defend them in battle by his power, and to give them eternal victory

to the praise of his own grace? O what motives are these to strengthen thy heart and thy hands. What hast thou reason to fear, since the Almighty is on thy side? The battle is his. If hosts of enemies oppose, yet following his orders, and trusting to his strength, thy victory is infallibly sure: for then thou wilt fight against them strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and thou wilt be invincible

In the whole armour of God. This armour is the provision which God has made for the safety of his soldiers. He puts it on them, and he keeps it on them. It is a whole armour, a complete defence from head to foot. In great mercy, their God, who provided it, has revealed to them the use of every part. In the sixth of the Ephesians, the apostle has described it at large. He supposes them to be acquainted with the Christian doctrines, and to have walked in the comfort of them, and he calls upon them to bring them into practice in their daily warfare: 'It only remains, my brethren, (says he,) that ye be strong in the Lord,'—for no strength less than his can keep you—'and in the might of what he is able to do'—by faith relying upon his promise, and trusting to his power—'putting on the whole armour of God:' that, being strengthened mightily by the Spirit in the inner man, ye may be preserved dependent upon the Lord, and enabled to engage in his strength, and to conquer to his glory. Unless you thus rely upon his word and arm, you will not be able to stand against the wiles of the devil: for we wrestle not only against flesh and blood, but also against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places: therefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be enabled to withstand in the evil day, against the combined legions of earth and hell, and after ye have done all to stand conquerors in the field of battle, when your enemies are driven out of it. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth: this is the first grace in use—

Saving knowledge, which the Holy Spirit teaches. He guides believers into all truth necessary for their salvation. As the military girdle went round the loins, and bound all the armour together, so the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus, binds together all the graces. It is of the essence of every one of them—it is light in the understanding to discover what they are, that they may be received into the heart in love, and that in obeying the truth, their influence may operate upon the life and conversation. When a man is

thus taught of God, then he sees his need of the breast-plate of righteousness, and he puts it on; namely, the

Imputed righteousness of the God-man. The breast-plate was armour for the vital parts—so is the righteousness of Christ—it is a perfect protection from every stroke of every enemy. He that wears it upon his heart, believing in the life and death of Immanuel, has armour proof against all weapons. If the strength of his adversaries could be collected into one arm, which was to strike one mighty blow, his breast-plate would ward it off. The armour of God could not be hurt. The soldier with it on cannot perish, but shall have everlasting life. Therefore, covered with this invincible breast-plate, he may face the stoutest foes, and attack them without fear. He may march on undaunted, 'having his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.'

Peace with God, through Jesus Christ, is another grace of the Spirit, which mightily strengthens the inner man. Whoever sees the truth of the gospel, and believes it, will discover God to be at peace with him, perfectly reconciled to him in Jesus, and who, out of his fatherly love, will overrule all things for his good. In the sense of this he may go on with holy boldness as the soldier did with his greaves on. When his feet and legs were armed with them, he was not afraid of thorns or briars, of rough roads or sharp spikes. In like manner, the peace, which the gospel brings, carries the Christian soldier fearless through difficulties. He will march on conquering, if he keep on his greaves. If he maintain peace with God through Jesus Christ, he will not be stopped by war, or trouble, or temptation. But he must remember, that to every piece of armour faith is essentially necessary—the girdle is good for nothing without the belief of the truth—the breast-plate is no defence without faith in the righteousness of God our Saviour—the greaves are no more than if the feet were covered with a bit of thin gauze, unless faith may be mixed with the gospel: 'Therefore *to all these* take the shield of faith, wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.' What excellent things are here spoken of.

Faith, as a grace of the Holy Spirit! When they used to fight with bows and arrows, the soldier could hold up his shield and keep himself safe: so the Christian soldier, if the fiery darts of Satan fly thick about him, by faith will quench them all. He has much combustible within him, and one spark would set him in a flame, if he had not his shield: but

armed with it, and opposing it to the arrows of the wicked one, he may lift up his head with joy: 'For he has the helmet of salvation' upon it. The grace here meant is

Hope, and it is fitly compared to a helmet, which was armour for the head, and a defence for all the senses which are seated in the head. It is called the helmet of *salvation*, because it *always saves*. It never can be destroyed. None of the senses of the spiritual man can perish in this warfare, and therefore it is a hope that maketh not ashamed. Hope, with its helmet on, fears no blows. I can truly say, I am commanded to be strong and of good courage, not to be afraid or dismayed; for the Lord my God is with me, whithersoever I go. Trusting to this command, hope is in wars and fightings full of glory and immortality. The Lord's orders to march forward are the ground of hope; and this supplies him with a weapon which none of his enemies can withstand, even the sword of the Spirit, which is the

'*Word of God.*' The Scripture is called a sword—(an offensive weapon—and it is the only one which a Christian soldier has—all the rest being for his defence) because it is mighty, through the Spirit working by it to cut off all opposers. Our Lord, in combat with the old serpent, defeated him with his sword. And the noble army of his followers, now crowned in glory, overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and 'by the word of their testimony'—they held fast their confidence in the word, and with it, as with a two-edged sword, they slew the old dragon, and gained eternal victory over him. Fight against him, O my soul, with the same weapon. Keep the sword in thy hand. Thou wilt stand in need of it every moment against that subtle foe. The word is the means of overcoming the devil, and it is mighty, through God, when heard and read in faith, and inwardly digested by prayer. The best soldier in the Lord's army is best acquainted with the necessity of prayer: he not only believes what God says of his armour, but he also depends upon him for the daily experience of it: and therefore when he has put his armour on, in the

Prayer of faith, he calls upon the Captain of his salvation for orders, courage, strength, victory, and every thing needful: 'Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance.' O my God, teach me thus to pray. I would depend on thee, and express my dependance without ceasing; for I am sensible that without thee I can do nothing. Although thou hast chosen me to

be a soldier, yet I have neither counsel nor strength for war. My foolish heart loves ease: it would have the crown, but it would be excused striving lawfully for it. I find nothing in myself that disposes me to endure the hardship of the Christian warfare. My whole trust, therefore, is in thee, Jesus, my Lord and my God. Thou hast called me to the battle, thou must fit me for it, keep me in it, and make me conqueror. All is of thee. The whole armour of God, which I have received, the saving knowledge, the righteousness and the peace, that precious faith and glorious hope, that sure word, wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust—these are the gifts of thy grace, and on thee, my Jesus, I entirely depend for the right use of them. Thou must still cover my head in the day of battle. Mine eyes are lifted up to thee, my hopes centre in thee, from whom alone cometh all my salvation. O Lord of hosts, keep me in this simple dependance npon thy word and arm, that I may exercise thy graces in fighting thy battles: and if thou art pleased to give me daily victory, I may be willing to return thee all thy glory. O faithful promise-keeping God, stand by me, and enable me to hold out, till I finish my course with joy, and my warfare being ended, I may bless thee for evermore for that peace which passeth all understanding. O grant me this for thy mercies' sake. Amen.

If this be thy dependance, if thou art standing in the Lord's strength, and trusting entirely to his armour, then consider, O my soul, thy safety in every battle. If thou go to war, calling upon thy God to be with thee and to give thee victory, then victory is certain. Thou canst not be conquered, if thou fight in faith, relying upon the orders of thy general, expecting his promised help, and waiting for it in prayer, trusting to the armour which he has put upon thee. Is this then thy defence? Dost thou pray always—begin the good fight—carry it on—and end it with the prayer of faith? Blessed be his holy name, since this is, in some measure, thy case, go on in his strength, and fear not to fight his battles, who hath chosen thee to be a soldier. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart. The more bold thou art in thy faith, the stronger shalt thou be in thy warfare: for whatever thou hast courage to do at his command, thou shalt perform in his strength. And why should a doubt arise? Hast thou forgotten that the great decisive battle has been fought and won? Immanuel stood up the great champion for his people. The almighty warrior entered the lists with their enemies, and he conquered all their hosts. He triumphed over Satan and the world, over

sin and death; and he led captivity captive. Remember, he calls upon thee to share in his victory, by faith to partake with him of the spoils, and to keep the vanquished enemies daily under thy feet. He has made them his footstool, and he will make them thine. This is thy warfare. And what hast thou to fear in it? What hurt can a dead man do thee? If he has a gun charged in his hand, he cannot fire it. He is not able to stir a finger. No more able is any adversary to destroy thee. Whilst thou art trusting to the complete victory of Jesus, thou wilt daily share with him in it. And the more simple thy trust is in him, the greater conquest will he give thee, because he will then receive from thee greater glory. How should this consideration inspire thee with courage—it is for his glory that thou shouldst conquer. Thy God commands thee to fight on his side, promises to assist thee, has provided invincible armour, and has, in his own person, engaged and defeated every enemy against whom thou art to fight; and therefore he requires thee, in obedience to his orders, depending upon his promises and armour, to bring him glory, by conquering in his strength. O my soul, hast thou not a zeal to promote the honour of thy Saviour? Is not his fame and renown very near thy heart? Dost thou not think it a privilege to be any ways instrumental in exalting his great name! Yes, Lord, thou hast made me willing to glorify thee. Thou art my lawful king, and I desire to honour thee by following thine orders, fighting thy battles, and relying entirely upon thy promises. I would not question thy faithfulness to them, nor fear any enemy against whom thou hast commanded me to fight. I would not doubt of thy strength to carry me through the battle, or to give me the promised victory. In this faith I conduct my warfare, and I would have all my success to bring fresh glory to thee. I know that the courage which I have in the field of battle is not from nature, but from grace. It arises from the belief that I am armed with the whole armour of God, and that the enemies, against whom I fight, are his as well as mine—his—whom he conquered for me—and is now conquering in me—and all to his own praise. From hence, Lord, arises my sure and certain hope of victory. I ground it on thy word. I fight in faith. I trust to thy complete victory, and now am sharing in it. My daily victories are only the fruit and effect of thine. O my almighty Jesus, give me grace to ascribe all the glory to thee. It is thy due. Make me willing to give it thee for the victories obtained for me, and in me. O keep me

by thine almighty power, through faith, till I have fought the good fight, and won the prize. Grant me this, blessed King of saints, to thine eternal honour and glory. Amen.

CHAP. XII.

The believer marches on, fighting the good fight of faith, and daily gains victory over the world.

THE world signifies the visible frame of nature; not the earth only, but also the present constitution of the universe, of animate and inanimate beings: all which were created good at first, but through the sin of man, and the just sentence of of God, are now subject to vanity.

The world has become a great enemy to fallen man: because it is always presenting something to his senses which is a temptation to sin. It keeps him from God by its flatteries, promising to make him happy in its enjoyments. It sets them before him. He looks and loves. He gives his heart a willing sacrifice to the world, and suffers himself to be entirely influenced by its hopes and fears.

While man was innocent, every object raised in him some spiritual idea, and thereby led him to contemplate and adore the great Creator in his works; but upon the fall he lost this use of natural objects: they did not, as they struck upon his senses, excite correspondent ideas in the mind; because the man was alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that was in him. His understanding was in darkness: he could not see the things of the Spirit of God: neither could he know them, for want of spiritual discernment. Being thus deprived of the image and likeness of God in knowledge, having no will but the will of the flesh, and his heart being at enmity with God, he sinks into communion with the creature. His very mind is carnal. His affections are earthly. His pursuits are after temporal things. His enjoyments are in the delights of sense. In this state he lives a mere animal life, without God, in the world.

Indeed, he has within him an immortal soul, but it is apostate. It is fallen from God, and has no more communion with him by nature than the devil has. The law has condemned it to death—the soul that sinneth it shall die—and it is already spiritually dead to God, being as incapable of quickening itself as a dead corpse is. Therefore it cannot attain of

itself any true knowledge of God, or have any real fellowship with the things of God. While fallen man is in this state, his earthly and sensual appetites take the lead; and all the light in his mind, and the desires of his heart, only dispose him to seek for their present gratification. Outward objects offer themselves to him; they make an impression upon his senses, and sometimes act upon them very forcibly, soliciting and enticing to the enjoyment of some fancied good; and so long as he continues an unregenerate man, these temptations prevail, and keep him from God. He does not see God in outward objects. He does not love God for them. He does not enjoy them to the glory of God. God is not in all his thoughts.

Man has been called a microcosm. He is so wonderfully made, that the whole creation comes under the observation of some of his senses. His eye, by means of light, can discover the form and surface of all objects. The ear takes in all sounds. The nose perceives all vapours and smells. The palate tastes all sorts of fluids. All sorts of solids come under the sense of feeling, which is in every part of the body, for the benefit and preservation of the whole. Thus every object in the universe is fitted to act upon some of the senses, and was intended by the Creator to excite some spiritual idea. But this use was lost by the fall. The impression made by outward objects does not raise up the mind to God, and excite adoration and praise; but keeps the heart from him, and affords a continual temptation to live to the world, and to the things of it. Whatever is presented to the eye, to the ear, &c. can stir up and bring forth evil. And actually does, according to the Scripture: for 'the whole world'—as fallen from God—'lieth in wickedness'—and is at enmity with him; and therefore believers are commanded: 'Love ye not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him: for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.' Mind, *all* that is in the world is the means of feeding some lust: for which reason the apostle calls it 'this present evil world'—evil because of sin, and because of its temptations to keep the heart in love with it, and to shut out the love of the Father.

How awfully solemn are these scriptures! What strict examination, O my soul, should they put thee upon! Search and try thyself by them, and see whether thou art saved from

the love of the world. It is a blessed part of redemption, and it is one of the brightest jewels in the Redeemer's crown. How infinitely glorious is this character: 'Jesus Christ gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world.' This deliverance is worthy of God. We had sinned by loving this present evil world, and he came to save us from our sins. It ruled over our hearts and lives, and kept us under its tyranny, and he came to deliver us from the love and from the power of it. Thrice happy are they for whom he thus gave himself. O my soul, read and study the everlasting honours of this great victory, and see whether thou art indeed a partaker of them. Jehovah was made flesh for his people, and, as their divine surety, came to conquer their enemies, the world among the rest. He was in their nature, to enter into open war with it, and to overcome every temptation by which it had drawn Adam or any of his descendants from God. Thus he was to conquer the world *for* them: and then by his Spirit he was to conquer it *in* them. He began the battle with his first breath, and every moment of his life he was victorious. The world has its snares for every age and state, but he fell into none of them. His hands were clean; his heart was pure: he never lifted up his soul to vanity; he was in his infancy the *holy child* Jesus; and he grew in wisdom and stature. When he was twelve years old he was wiser than his teachers; for he sat in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions: and all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. His delight was in the law of the Lord, and in this law did he meditate day and night—he saw things as they are there described in their true nature. The world could not impose upon him. He lived above its offers of good. And he feared not the worst of its threatened evils. When he began his ministry he fought a pitched battle, and became an eternal conqueror: the prince of this world was permitted to try every object by which the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life, had seduced mankind. They were presented to Christ in their richest dress. The beauty, the pleasure, the honour, and riches of the world were set before him in all their glory. But they made no impression. They did not darken his understanding, nor influence his heart, nor provoke any sensual appetite. He rejected every pleasing offer; he withstood every flattering allurement. Thus he conquered the world, but not for himself. His victory over all his temptations was for his people. He accounted their

enemies his. He fought their battles. He conquered, as a king for his subjects; and he gives them to share with him in his triumph, when they believe in him; for thus he encourages them: 'These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace: in the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good courage, *I have overcome the world.*' The world is your enemy. It had you in bondage, and you could not free yourselves; therefore I came in your nature, God manifest in the flesh, to conquer it for you; and I have obtained a perfect conquest. When I have proclaimed it to your consciences, and pardoned your idolatrous attachment to the world —when *in* me ye have found peace, yet still the world will be your enemy. Because I have chosen you out of it, therefore it will hate you. My peace will occasion and increase your tribulation in it. But fear not. Remember it is a vanquished foe. Attack it in my strength, as partakers of my victory. Fight against it, and treat it as under my feet, and made my foot-stool. Whenever it tempts you, depend absolutely upon my conquest, and you will find my grace almighty, to crucify the world to you, and you to it.

How animating are these words! with what courage should they inspire the Christian soldier! Although the world be his enemy, yet it cannot conquer him, and rob him of his crown. The main battle has been fought, the victory is gained, and the conqueror is already crowned in the name and person of all the redeemed. By faith he gives them their share in his victory, as it is written: 'Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' Every person who is born again by the Spirit has a new nature, spiritual and heavenly, and has new senses to exercise about spiritual things. His renewed faculties were formed for heavenly things, as his bodily senses are for material. By faith he sees a better world than this, and surveys its beauties and glories. He has ears to hear the joyful sound of gospel grace, and to receive it. When that name, which is dear and precious above every name, is preached, it is to him an ointment poured forth: the sweet-smelling savour refreshes his heart, and exhilarates his spirits. Then he tastes that the Lord is gracious—foretastes his heavenly love, and as truly lays hold of and enjoys its spiritual blessings as he ever did of any thing material. He is created anew in Christ Jesus, not only that he may know these things, but may also partake of them—as truly now by faith as he ever will by sense; and the more he knows, and the more he

partakes of them, the more will he be delivered from this present evil world: for 'this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' By faith we see the victory of Christ, and rest upon it, and the more safely we put our trust and confidence in it, the more fellowship we shall have with him in its fruits—more wisdom to see the vanity of the world as he saw it—more grace to deliver us from the love of it—and more strength to subdue its temptations. These are some of the happy effects of his conquests, which he left us to enjoy here, as pledges of our being one day what he now is. He is more than conqueror; so shall we be, through him that loveth us. As our faith increases, we shall share more with him, and triumph more over the smiles and the frowns of the world.

Since this is the only way to conquer the world, art thou, O my soul, conquering it in this way, and hast thou faith in the victory of Jesus? Dost thou depend on him for the pardon of thy former love of the world, and the crucifying the love of it in thy heart? Art thou relying upon his victorious grace to make thee a daily conqueror over all its temptations? Examine thy warfare, and see whether it be carried on according to the scripture rule, and with the promised success? Look at some of the Lord's champions. Survey the triumphs of Moses, and remember the Lord's hand is not shortened—'By *faith* Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharoah's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, that to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.' How great was this faith! How glorious its victories! It was a divine grace, and exercised by a divine operation—mighty through God. By it Moses saw the reality of heavenly things; by it he tasted their sweetness, enjoyed their blessedness, and had a hope full of glory and immortality. The world made him its highest offers, but he rejected them. His eye was kept single, his heart chaste towards his God. The honour of Pharoah's alliance he despised. He preferred affliction with the people of God to the pleasures of sin. He embraced reproach, when it came on him for following Christ, and he esteemed it beyond all the treasures of Egypt. He saw the vanity and emptiness of earthly enjoyments, and he trampled upon them, having respect unto the recompense of the reward. Thus he was crucified to the world. What an exalted character! There is no such hero in the records of profane history; but, thank

God, there are great numbers in sacred, who follow the steps of his faith. Every soldier of Christ Jesus is called to war against the world, and every good soldier is a daily conqueror. The world is always present, and has its temptations ready to stop him, but he meets them strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, trusting to the whole armour of God. Then victory is certain. And in order that the Lord may have all the glory, he will keep him fighting and praying in this manner:

This world is not my portion. My happiness does not consist in loving and enjoying the things of it. It is an evil world —it lieth in wickedness. Satan has his seat and throne in it —and it is condemned to fire. Thank God, mine eyes are open to see a better world than this, and I am travelling to it— I believe it was the purpose and will of the eternal Three to choose me to be an heir of the world to come. Glory be to the Father for his free choice, and for all the blessings of his love. Glory be to the co-equal Son, for his complete and everlastingly-perfect salvation. Glory be to the eternal Spirit, to whom I am indebted for what I believe of the Son's salvation, and for what I have experienced of the Father's love. On thee, O God the Holy Ghost, I place my dependence for carrying on the work which thou hast begun. I would be guided by thy counsel every step of my walk, and strengthened by thee for every part of my warfare. Keep me in the right way, and make me conqueror over all the enemies who would stop me in it, or turn me out of it; especially deliver me from this present evil world. While I am going through it to a better, preserve my heart from the love of it. O my God, give me a stranger's temper, and a pilgrim's frame. Let me live a sojourner here below, that the good things I meet with on my journey may not tempt me to make this my rest, and the evil things I meet with may not lead me to fret and murmur, as if God was not my Father, and his heaven my home. O thou Divine teacher, shew me daily the glory of my Saviour's victory over the world, that I may share with him in it; and enable me to go forth conquering and to conquer, in his strength and to his praise. Help me to look upon the world and to treat it as he did, that, feeling the emptiness of its offered happiness, I may with a single heart cleave to my Father in Jesus, and may be saved from the spirit of the world. Keep me waiting for my appointed time, sitting quite loose and free to the things about me—and let heavenly and eternal things be always present to my faith, in their reality and blessedness,

that I may grow more alive to them, and more dead to every thing else. Preserve my heart, O my gracious God, that I may be simple with thee when I am in my worldly business. Enable me to cast all my cares and burdens on thee, believing thou carest for me. O daily crucify the world to me, and me to it, that when its offers stand in competition with thy love, I may have grace to reject them. In this holy war carry me on glorifying him who hath called me to be a soldier. Grant me this for Jesus' sake. Amen and Amen.

CHAP. XIII.

The believer marches on resisting and overcoming the wiles and assaults of the tempter.

SATAN is a continual adversary. He rebelled against the sovereign will of the Most High in heaven, and was cast out. As soon as man was formed, he began to tempt him to rebel against God, and he succeeded. Ever since the revelation was made of the Divine purpose to redeem sinners, he has set himself up against it, and with impotent rage opposed it. He is always trying to hinder sinners from coming to the Saviour; and when they are come to him, to hinder them from living by faith upon his fulness. On the side of Satan are principalities and powers, combined armies and united legions of apostate spirits—formidable to man for their number— more so for their subtlety and cunning: they have stratagems and wiles, depths of skill to deceive—in which they are so successful that they have deceived the whole world. Their courage is desperate. They fear nothing: for they were mad enough to take up arms against the Almighty. No wonder then that they should be unwearied in their attacks against man. They are always upon the watch—ready, as one temptation fails, to present another. Their strength is very great—they are called principalities and powers—rulers and princes—yea, the god of this world, because they work as they please in the children of disobedience, whom they keep so fast bound in the chains of sin, that no human arm can break them asunder. And it is the only joy they know—the joy of hell—to rivet the chains of sin upon those poor captives, till they bind them in everlasting chains of darkness.

These, O my soul, are thine enemies. They had drawn thee into their rebellion, and they are still trying to draw thee into their torments. They have free access to thy fallen nature-

They know how to make use of the objects in the world to work upon thy senses, and to stir up evil thoughts. They have fiery darts always at hand to throw at thy faith, and rest not night and day in attacking thy peace and happiness in Jesus.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name, for undertaking to save thee from those enemies. The love of the Father gave his Son to be the woman's seed—Jehovah incarnate—for his people. In their nature he was to bruise the head of the serpent: his cunning, his poison, and all his power to hurt, lie in his head: when this is bruised, he is defeated. The battle to be fought was foretold, and the victory to be won was promised to Adam; and by faith in it, he and all the redeemed in the Old Testament conquered Satan. In the fulness of time God was manifest in the flesh: he came to destroy the works of the devil. Sin is his great work; by it he drew man from God, and by it he keeps man from God. Immanuel began the destruction of the works of the devil by taking human nature. His manhood was perfectly holy—it had not, it could not have, any sin: because God was in Christ. There was every thing in his holy life which the law could require: he obeyed all its precepts with uninterrupted conformity, and being co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, his obedience was therefore divine, absolutely complete, and infinitely sufficient to justify for ever. He was tempted, indeed, but he overcame every temptation. He defeated Satan in all his attempts, insomuch that when he was entering upon the last scene of his life, he could declare: 'The prince of this world cometh, *and hath nothing in me.*' He did come, and the great pitched battle was fought which was to decide for ever, whether the seed of the woman or the serpent should be crowned conqueror? The battle began in the garden of Gethsemane, and was finished upon Mount Calvary. Every stratagem of infernal policy was then tried; every assault of devilish malice was exerted against the Captain of our salvation; but he conquered them all, as it was foretold: 'Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under thy feet. He trod upon the serpent's head, and crushed it; but, at the same time, the serpent bit his heel. The heel is his lowest part—his body—this fell in the conflict; but he completed his victory by the loss of his life. The apostle speaks of the cross, upon which he bled and died, as the great scene of this engagement, and on which he vanquished and triumphed for ever over the powers of hell—having spoiled

principalities and powers, and taken away all their armour wherein they trusted, he made a show of them, openly triumphing over them upon the cross, leading them as you would captives in chains; rebels still, but unable to rob the Lord Christ of the glory of any part of his conquest. Thus through death he conquered death, and him that had the power of death, that is the devil. O blessed and almighty Jesus, eternal thanks are due to thee for this most glorious victory. Satan is now a vanquished foe. He is under thy feet, thou high exalted Head of the redeemed. Thou hast for them, and in their stead, overcome all his wiles and assaults. He may tempt, but he cannot conquer them. He has no right to accuse them—thou hast made an end of sin. He has no power to torment them—thou hast brought in everlasting righteousness. He cannot pluck them out of thy hands—they are dear to thee, and kept as the apple of thine eye. Glory be to thee, thou wilt soon bring them out of the reach of his temptations, and thou wilt be to them an eternal and infinitely-perfect Saviour.

In this faith, O my soul, thou art called upon to take up arms against the old serpent. Thou art to fight against him under the banner of *Jesus*—a name terrible to the devil and his angels. Trusting to the victory of Jesus for thee, and to the strength of Jesus working in thee, thou art daily to bring him honour and renown. How safe, how blessed is such a warfare! Thou hast the wisdom of thy God and Saviour to discover to thee the wiles of Satan. Trust to it, O my soul. Leave thyself simply to his direction; and although Satan be subtle and cunning—although he has depths of policy, and plans out of number, yet thou shalt not be ignorant of his devices. Thy all-knowing Saviour will detect his plots, and turn the counsel of that Ahithopel into folly. And if he attack thee as a roaring lion, yet fear him not. Thy Redeemer is strong. He has bruised the serpent's head; resist him in faith, and thou shalt bruise it also. Lean on the arm of thy Jesus; depend on his promised strength; follow his orders, and thou shalt tread Satan under thy feet daily.

But, above all, remember that thou canst only conquer him by faith—by faith in the victory of Jesus, built upon thy faith in the word of Jesus; for this the Scripture testifies of the conquerors now round the throne—that they overcame the devil by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. They overcame him by depending upon the atoning blood, and by trusting to what the word says of its all-sufficiency to

save; and they found by experience the promised victory. To the same effect the apostle Peter stirs up believers to a sobriety in the use of all creature-comforts, and to a continual watchfulness against their enemies, in order that they might daily conquer: 'Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist *steadfast in the faith.*' This brings victory. The believer resists the devil, and stands against him steadfastly in the power of Christ. This power is almighty, and therefore faith relying upon it infallibly secures victory. The devil may throw his fiery darts thick and fast, but the shield of faith is proof against them. It is able, through God, to quench them; so that the fire of temptation shall not inflame the soul. How precious are these scriptures! How encouraging to the Christian soldier! They promise him every thing needful for the battle and for victory. Why then shouldst thou doubt, O my soul, of the promised blessings? Take courage. Fight under the banner of Jesus. Keep close to his colours. Follow strictly his order; and he will keep Satan under thy feet to-day, and thou shalt be more than conquerer over him for ever.

Considering thy war with Satan in this light, what is there in it, O my soul, to stop thee in thy way to heaven? Thou art called upon to fight against him, but then it is the Lord's strength, and as a partaker of his conquest. He made all thine enemies his. He fought thy battles. His triumph is thine. Thou mayest therefore sing of victory before every battle. Thou dost not fight to gain the pardon of thy sins, or to make thyself righteous: but to oppose thine adversary, who would draw thee into sin, and if he could, would rob thee of thy righteousness. He hates thee, because Christ loves thee: but his hatred is in vain. Thy Saviour has conquered him for thee, and by faith will conquer him in thee; for thou art kept by his almighty power. Trusting to this, go forth, strong in the Lord. While thou art living in communion with him, thy warfare will be successful. If thou attend to his word, and follow his orders, he will encourage thy heart, and strengthen thy hand with such promises as these:—

'I have chosen thee to be a soldier, and I send thee out to fight against all the enemies of thy peace. But thou dost not go to this warfare at thine own charges, nor carry it on doubtful of victory. I have provided every thing needful for maintaining the battle, and for bringing thee off conqueror. Thou shalt find much profit in this holy war. It will be the means

of keeping up constant fellowship with me. Thou shalt see thy need of coming to me for courage, for orders, for strength; and by faith thou wilt receive sensible experience of my being present with thee, and on thy side. Only trust me, and thou shalt find me faithful to my promise of help and victory. Go forth then to thy daily warfare, and boldly face Satan. Fear him not in the least: for that would betray a doubt of my having him under my feet, or of putting him under thine. Give not place to him; no, not for a moment: but resist him, and continue to resist him, steadfast in faith and prayer—trusting to my promise, and depending on mine arm. Be sober, be vigilant. Thus oppose the devil, and thou wilt certainly conquer him; and, having conquered, fight on. In the fight look to me for victory: having obtained it, expect a fresh battle, and look still to me for victory: and thus go on conquering and to conquer. Thy crown is in my keeping. As sure as I have it on my head, it shall be on thine. Thou shalt soon sit down with me on my throne, a crowned conqueror for evermore.

Glory be to thee, my precious Jesus, for these faithful promises, in which thou hast caused me to put my trust. And now, Lord, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant be established, and do as thou hast said. Thou hast put it into my heart to desire to be a good soldier, and to fight thy battles against all enemies of thy crown and dignity. O thou glorious Captain of my salvation, arm me for my daily warfare with Satan. He is too cunning for me; O my God, teach me his devices. He is too mighty for me, but the seed of the woman hath bruised his head: yes, almighty Jesus, thou hast destroyed the devil and his works. I believe in thy victory. O let me partake of its fruits, and daily bring thee honour and renown by my victories. Make me strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, that I may not fear Satan: send me out against him, armed with thine invincible armour. Strengthen me, O my God, that I faint not through the length or sharpness of the battle; but enable me to persevere, till thou discharge me from the war. Thus, in a constant dependence upon thee, would I fight the good fight of faith, keep up communion with thee in every battle, and growing more acquainted with my wants, and more thankful for every supply. O my loving Jesus increase my fellowship with thee. I desire to war a good warfare, and every thing needful for it is from thee. From thy fulness I expect it; and when I receive it, I would use it to thy glory. Hear, Lord, and answer me, for thy mercies' sake. Amen and Amen.

CHAP. XIV.

The believer, kept by the power of God, perseveres in his holy walk and victorious warfare.

After the believer has made a great progress in his walk, and has been very successful in his warfare, yet he is not out of the reach of any temptation. He is still liable to be stopped in the way of duty. His enemies may cheat him by some stratagem, or gain some advantage over him by open force. While he is attending to these things, as they come before him in his daily experience, a thought will often arise:

I am afraid my profession will at last come to nothing, and I shall be a cast-away. I feel so much corruption working in my duties, and my heart is so ready to revolt and to turn from the Lord in every battle, that I cannot help being uneasy about my final state. How can I? it is not in me to hold out and persevere against so much opposition from within and without. What signifies my resolution to walk forward, or to fight for an uncertain crown? I think I gain no ground. My own carnal will plagues me, and I love ease and quiet as much as ever. My corruptions seem as many, and mine enemies as strong, as they were. One day, I fear, I shall perish by their hands. My heart faints at the thought. My courage fails me. O wretched man that I am! where, to whom, shall I look for strength, to enable me to hold out unto the end?

No believer is absolutely free from such an attack; and there are seasons very favourable to it. If his mind be in heaviness through manifold temptations, and by reasoning legally upon them; if he be under the hidings of the Lord's countenance, or in a time of desertion; if he be fallen into any great sin, perhaps his old besetting sin; if the guilt of it be upon his conscience, and the indignation of God be heavy upon him; then such thoughts find easy admittance: and if they be indulged, they greatly distress the believer; for they directly assault his faith, and strike at the very being of his hope. As these graces are weakened, he moves slowly; and if unbelief prevail, there is a stop put to his progress in the heavenly road.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who has made ample provision for victory over this temptation. The principles *before* insisted on are now to be brought into practice. Here *is a fresh* occasion to try their power and influence, and to

make it appear that in these distressing circumstances the Father has given his children good ground to rely upon his unchangeable love. He has revealed to them the immutability of his counsel and of his oath, that when they have fled to Jesus for refuge, they may comfort their hearts, and say—I have been afraid of falling away, but it is without reason; for I have still immutable things to trust in—although to my sense and feeling, every thing seems to make against me, yet God has promised not to leave me nor forsake me. O that I may honour his promise, and without doubting rely upon his faithful arm to make it good!

Consider then, O my soul! the principles of the doctrine of Christ. Review them carefully. Thou seest what influence they have upon every step of thy walk, and how mighty they are, through God, to carry thee through all thy difficulties. O study then the perfect freeness and the absolute sufficieney of the salvation of Jesus. Read and mark the bonds and securities which a faithful God has given thee to trust in, and not to be afraid. The time to honour them most is to believe them, when thou hast the least sensible evidence; for that is the strongest faith. If thou canst believe upon his bare word, and it is a very good warrant, thy feet shall stand firm upon the rock, and thy goings shall be well ordered: and that thou mayest believe this in the hardest trials, God informs thee that thy continuance in grace does not depend on thyself. 'Thou standest by faith:' and faith should direct thee to what God has undertaken and has promised to do for thee. He would have thee to place the confidence of thy heart upon his tried word, which is a never-failing foundation, and if thou wast to build all thy hopes of persevering upon it, it would quiet thy fears and comfort thy heart. Thou wouldst then see that God has not left thee to thyself to stand or fall, but has engaged never to leave thee nor forsake thee. He has declared he will not turn away from thee to do thee good, and he will put his fear into thy heart, and thou shalt not turn away from him. View thy case in this comfortable light, and, while thou art considering the safety of thy persevering, as revealed in Scripture for the ground of thy faith, may every promise lead thee to trust more in God, and to trust less to thyself, and then the snare which was laid for thee will be broken, and thou wilt be delivered.

But take heed of carrying thine opinions to Scripture, and of forcing it to speak for them. Beware of that common mistake; and beware of human systems. Pay no regard to

men or names. Simply attend to the promises of God concerning thy persevering. Thy present trial has convinced thee that thou canst not depend on thy own faithfulness: this therefore is the time to learn practically the faithfulness of God, and to improve thy faith in it from such Scripture arguments as these:

First, The nature of the divine covenant, which is not only the unchangeable will of the eternal Three, but is also their agreement, confirmed by oath, concerning the heirs of promise.

The Father loved them as his children, freely, with an everlasting love: he chose them and gave them to his Son; he engaged to keep them by his power through faith unto salvation.

The Son accepted them, and wrote all their names in his book (not one of them therefore can be lost;) he undertook to be made man, and to live and die for them; to rise from the dead, to ascend, and to intercede for them; and he sitteth as king mediator upon the throne, till every one of them be brought to glory.

The Holy Spirit covenanted to carry into execution the purposes of the Father's love, and to apply the blessings of the Son's salvation. He undertook to quicken the heirs of promise, to call them effectually, to guide, to strengthen, to sanctify, and to comfort them; yea, he is not to leave them, till the number of the elect be perfected. Therefore *he abides with them for ever*.

In this covenant the eternal Three have undertaken for every heir of promise—to do all *for* him, and all *in* him—for the means, and for the end—so that not one of them can perish: for faithfulness to the covenant is one of the highest honours of the godhead: 'I am Jehovah, your Alehim, which *keepeth* covenant, I will *ever be mindful* of my covenant—My covenant *will I not break*, nor alter the thing that has gone out of my mouth.' What strong consolation is there in these words! Study them, O my soul, that by them thy faith may be established, and they may do thee good, like a medicine.

Thou art afraid of falling away; but the blessed Trinity have undertaken to hold thee up, and their covenant-engagements are to be the ground of thy believing that they will fulfil what they have promised. Observe and adore the goodness of God: see, how he meets thy doubts, and answers thine objections—'An oath for confirmation is among men an end of all strife: wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew to

the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge' to Jesus. Thy faith should run parallel with this promise, and should safely trust as far as it warrants thee: now it gives thee sufficient reason to conclude, that thy state before God is immutable, and that he has determined thou shalt not fall away and perish: for observe,

Secondly, His design in the covenant. He knew thy frame thine infirmities, and thy temptations, and therefore he provided the covenant, and promised the blessings of it upon oath, *for thy sake*—to end *all* strife in thy conscience—and to give thee strong consolation. This was his mind and will. He revealed it for thee, to settle thy heart in believing, and to administer to thee great comfort. Weigh attentively each of these particulars, and then say, what more could have been done to satisfy thee of thine immutable persevering?

But thou thinkest, 'Such trials as thine are uncommon, and perhaps not provided for in the covenant, and therefore it can be no disparagement to the Divine faithfulness if thou shouldest fall away.' How can this be, since the everlasting covenant is *ordered in. all things*, and on the part of God is absolutely *sure*—nothing that concerns thee is left out of it—not a single hair of thy head—thy trials are all appointed and ordered, and the end also which they are to answer.

Perhaps, from the clear evidence of the divine record, thou art convinced of the covenant of God to save the heirs of promise, and of his engaging to keep them that they shall never perish; but thou art afraid thou art not in the covenant, nor an heir of promise. From whence arise thy fears? From Scripture? No: all Scripture is on thy side.—Hast thou not fled, as a poor sinner, to Jesus for refuge? Hast thou not acknowledged his divine nature, and his all-sufficient work? And though thou art now tempted to doubt, yet some faith is still fighting against unbelief. These are covenant blessings. O look up then to Jesus—why not *thy* Jesus? But however look to him—keep looking on—and he will give thee reason to be ashamed of thy doubts and fears.

But the Lord hides himself from me, and therefore I fear I am not in his favour. This objection is answered in the charter of grace; *I will not turn away from doing thee good.* He has hidden his face, and thou art troubled: this trouble is for good. It should put thee upon inquiring into the reason for

God's hiding himself. It should humble thee, and should exercise thy faith upon such a Scripture as this: 'For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him; I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart: I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and will restore comforts to him and to his mourners.'—Although he hid himself, yet he had love to his people: although he smote them, yet it was with a fatherly correction. But

Thou fearest God not only hides his face, but has also quite forsaken thee: he may, as to thy sense and feeling, but not as to his own purpose, which changeth not. Hear how he speaks to thee, and silences thy doubts: 'For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee: in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.' How gracious is thy God! What infinite mercy is it, that he should give thee such promises, so suited to the trials of thy faith, to preserve thee under them, and to bring thee out of them! Read carefully, over and over again, these promises; and may every reading of them disperse the cloud of unbelief, until thy soul be enlivened with the light of the Lord's loving countenance.

But perhaps thou art in a worse case, as to thine own apprehension: Thou thinkest—God is incensed against me, and justly—he has cast me off, and I can expect no more favour at his hand: once, indeed, I thought he loved me, but I have fallen into a great sin—an old besetting sin—my conscience accuses me of committing it against light and conviction—it is a foul black spot, such as is not to be found upon the children of God.

Thou art fallen: and wilt thou lie there, and not be raised up again? Thou art under guilt: and wilt thou nurse it, and add sin to sin? Aggravate the sinfulness of thy fall as much as thou wilt, yet thou canst not be truly humbled for it, but by returning to God, and by trusting in the plenteous redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Then thy heart will be softened and melted into love, for grace will have its due honour, and thou wilt see what the Scripture says of thy case, in its divine truth and majesty. Thou wilt feel thyself exactly what the word of God says of thee—a fallen and sinful creature: in thee (that is, in thy flesh) dwelleth no good thing; so that there is *not* any sin but thou art capable of falling into it, through the *strength* of temptation. So long as thou art in the body, the

flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: in this conflict thou mayest fall, but the covenant secures thee from perishing. Abraham, the father of the faithful, fell—the friend of God fell into the same sin again and again. Moses fell: so did David. Peter, forewarned, fell: so did all the apostles. Yet they were believers, and they recovered themselves out of the snare of the devil. For whatever sin thou art fallen into may be pardoned, as theirs was. 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin:' there is in it an infinite virtue to wash away every spot and stain; it is a public fountain; it stands open for daily use, that believers may wash and be clean; it is always, at every given moment, effectual; it *cleanseth*, in the present tense, *now*—to-day, while it is called to-day: for there is nothing new to be suffered on the part of Christ, in order to take away sin. He put it away by the sacrifice of himself: the Father accepted it, and thus proclaims the free forgiveness of all the trespasses for which the atonement was made: 'I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.' Why dost thou reject the comfort of this promise? It is suited to thy present distress, and is the remedy for it. Thou art fallen into unrighteousness: God says, I will be merciful to it. Thou art fallen into sins and iniquities: he says, I will remember them no more. Thou mayest remember thy fall, but let it be in order to rise from it by faith. It should teach thee thy need of the blood of the Lamb. It should bring thee to sprinkle it afresh upon thy conscience, and to live safe and happy under the protection of it. Thus apply it to thy fall, and thou wilt repent aright; thou wilt be truly humbled and made more watchful. Thou wilt live more by faith in thy covenant God, wilt glorify more the infinitely perfect salvation of Jesus, and wilt be more dependant upon the grace and keeping of the eternal Spirit.

Consider then, O my soul, the rich, abounding, superabounding grace of thy God, in making such a provision for raising thee up when fallen into sin. He intended the promises in the covenant should be the means of thy recovery, as they give thee good ground still to trust in a covenant God, and in his immutable counsel and oath. O lie not then in guilt; rest not in unbelief; give not place to the devil. The Lord has put words into thy mouth, may he help thee, in the faith of thy heart, to take them up and say, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the in-

dignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me; he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.' If the Lord open to thee the rich treasury of grace in this scripture, and enable thee to depend on the ample security here given for raising thee from thy fall, then consider, in the

Third place, the express promises made in the covenant, that the believer shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. —These promises are not conditional, made to the believer upon certain terms, as if upon doing his part God would do his also; for he does not stand by his own will, or strength, or faithfulness; he does not hold out to the end by his own diligence and watchfulness in means, or receive the crown of glory as the merited reward of any works of righteousness done by him: the promises are all of free grace, not dependant on man's will, but on God's; not yea and nay, but of absolutely certain fulfilment. They were all made in the covenant to Christ the head, and are already made good to Christ, as the head, for the use of his members—'For *all* the promises of God are in him yea, and in him *Amen*.' He was given for the covenant of his people, and as such, he undertook to do all their works for them and in them, and therefore all the promised blessings of the covenant are laid up in his fulness—'in him they are yea'—and laid up, as the head has the fulness of the senses for the use of his members—'in him they are *Amen*.' He communicates the promised blessings freely, not conditionally; by believing, and not for working: 'Therefore (says the apostle speaking of Christ's righteousness,) it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.'

In this sovereign manner and style runs the covenant and every promise in it: 'I will be their God,' of mine own mere motion and grace, 'and according to the good pleasure of mine own will'—and they shall be my people'—my will shall make them willing in the day of my power: for I will work in them both to will and do: yea, *I will be* a Father unto them, and *they shall be* my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. The word *Father* relates to his children, and expresses the unchangeable love of his heart towards them: it is a dear covenant name, and denotes the inseparable connexion between him and his children: whenever they hear it, it should always excite in them an idea of his everlasting affection. He loves *his family* as a Father, and loves every one of them with the

same almighty love. He cannot change. He cannot cease to be a Father, and they cannot cease to be his children. His name is a security to them, that they cannot perish: for if one of them could, they all might. And then his covenant purpose to bring many sons unto glory would be defeated—his relation to them as a Father would be broken—he would be a Father, without children—he would deny them the promised blessings—he would forget to be gracious to them—his will concerning them would change, or would be overruled by some opposite will—and his great plan in the covenant would come to nothing. But these things cannot possibly be. He is the Father of his children, and he has engaged, by promise and oath, to love, to bless, and to keep them for ever. Out of perfect love he gave them to his Son, who undertook to be their Saviour: he came and was made man, Jehovah incarnate, to live and die for them. He was so delighted with them (for he has all their names written in his book,) and with the work, that he was straitened till it was accomplished. Blessings on him for ever! it is finished. The royal Saviour is upon the throne, almighty to save his dear redeemed. He would lose his name, which is above every name; the honours of his salvation would fade away upon his head, and the glories of his offices would come to nothing, if one, whom Jesus lived and died to save, should perish. But it is not possible. Whom he loves, he loves unto the end. 'I give unto them (says he) eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.' They are his seed—and it was covenanted that he should see his seed. They are the travail of his soul—and he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. How can he be satisfied, if any one of them should be lost? He prayed: 'Holy Father, keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one.' And the Father always heard him. He prayed that they might be with him where he is, to see his glory: and the Holy Spirit covenanted to bring them to it—he undertook, as his name, *Spirit*, imports, to breathe life into them, to call, to convert them, to keep them, and to give them every thing needful for their spiritual life. How can they fail of coming to glory, being thus kept for it by the power of God? The Holy Spirit would lose his name, *Spirit*, or breath of life, and his office, which is to abide with, and to dwell for ever in, the elect people of God, if any one of them should die from God, and perish. Thus there is full security given by the names and offices of the Trinity, that

believers shall be kept from falling away. The Father cannot be without his children. The glory of Jesus would fade away, if one of his redeemed was plucked out of his hand. The divine honours of the Spirit of life would be eclipsed, if he was to forsake his charge, and suffer any of the redeemed to fall into hell. But these things cannot be. The will of the Father, Son, and Spirit, is the same concerning the salvation of the elect, which is as secure as covenant bonds and oaths can make it.

Art thou then, O my soul, established in this great truth? Dost thou yield to the power of the evidence which the blessed Trinity have vouchsafed to give thee? Meditate carefully upon it for the growth of thy faith. Search the Scriptures, and observe how clearly God declares his fixed purpose to keep his people, and to hold them up unto the end. The great preacher of the gospel in the Old Testament church, speaks thus of the unchangeable will of a covenant God: 'The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.' A great preacher in the New Testament church has confirmed the same precious truth. He is treating of the golden chain of salvation, and shewing how inseparable every link of it is, and in this prospect he triumphs: 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loveth us.' By the mouth of these two infallible witnesses the truth is established—they depose that the covenant is immutable, and that nothing can separate believers from the love wherewith God loves them in his Son. O most comfortable doctrine! How encouraging is it in any undertaking to set about it with certain hope of success! How animating in our Christian walk, how reviving in the dark and difficult path of it, to have God's promise that he will keep us, and bring us to a happy end! How pleasing is it to go on by faith in our warfare, casting all our care upon him who careth for us! How delightful is it to trust his promise, and daily to find it made good: 'Ye are kept by the *power of* God, through faith, unto eternal salvation.' Here,

O my soul, thou art to seek for strong consolation amidst the trials and difficulties of thy walk. Thou art afraid of falling —God has engaged to hold thee up. Thou hast been tempted to think thou shouldst fall quite away, and come to nothing— but God says, thou art *preserved* in Christ Jesus—His covenant and oath are made to confirm the faith of thy persevering. Thou standest by faith, and thy faith should lead thee to rest safely on what God says about thy standing: and for thy faith itself, its continuing, its increasing, thou hast his infallible faithfulness to depend upon. Thou art weak—but he keeps thee by his power. Thine enemies are strong—but none of them shall pluck thee out of his hand. Thou art willing to join them, and to depart from the living God—but he has promised to put his fear into thy heart, and thou shalt not depart from him. He meets with thy doubts, and answers all thine objections in a word—for he hath said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'

Be of good courage then, O my soul, and go forward, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and he will bring thee safe to the end of thy journey. He has promised it. Put thyself into his hands, and give him the glory of keeping thee. He will hold up thy goings in his paths, that thy footsteps slip not. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore. How then canst thou miscarry, safe under his guidance and keeping? Commit thy ways unto the Lord. Do it simply. Look up by faith to his promise, and then lean on his arm. Thus going on thou mayest rejoice at every step in the Lord thy God. He has left thee a sweet hymn upon the subject, with which the weary travellers to Sion have often refreshed their spirits. Take it up, and sing it after them. Study it. Mix faith with it: and with perfect reliance on what God, who cannot lie, has promised in it to do for thee, sing and make melody with it in thy heart unto the Lord—

'In that day sing ye unto her, a vineyard of red wine: I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day: fury is not in me: who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or will he take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, then he shall make peace with me. He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root; Israel shall blossom and bud, and shall fill the face of the world with fruit.'

O my good God and faithful keeper, I do believe these precious promises; help my unbelief. Forgive my distrusting thy faithfulness, and enable me steadfastly to rely upon it for the future. What return can I make unto thee for grafting me into the true vine? O Lord, this love surpasseth knowledge. I was fit for nothing but the fire, and thou hast brought me into the vineyard of red wine, and hast enabled me to trust in that blood of the Lamb which cheereth God and man. On this my soul lives, and is refreshed: and being through grace *in* him, and living *upon* him, I bless thee, holy Father, for thy faithful promise to keep me unto the end. I am still an easy prey to all those who seek the hurt of my soul; but thou hast given me thy word, that lest any hurt me, thou wilt keep me night and day. I confess, gracious God, that I have dishonoured thee by doubting of thy love, and by questioning its unchangeableness; but now I believe that fury is not in thee to any one branch in the true vine. There is love, and nothing but love in all thy dealing with Christ, and with his. Forgive my guilty fears and suspicions of thy forsaking me, arising from my weakness, and from the strength of mine enemies: I now see that thou canst as easily consume them as fire can briars and thorns. Lord, increase my faith in thy promised strength, that I may lay hold of it for peace, and may keep fast hold of it for maintaining peace with thee always and by all means. O grant me this, my good God, that my faith may work more by love. Let me take deeper root in Jesus, and grow up more into him, blossoming and budding and flourishing in his vineyard. I depend upon thee to keep me a branch, in him, and to make me a fruitful branch, bringing forth plentifully the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus to the glory and praise of God. I believe the work is thine—thou hast began it—and thou wilt carry it on until the day of the Lord Jesus. Thou art faithful to thy word and work. In dependance upon thy faithfulness I hope to persevere. Let it be done unto me according to thy promises, wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Hear, Lord, and answer, for thy mercies' sake in Jesus, to whom with thee and the eternal Spirit, three persons in one godhead, be equal glory and praise, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAP. XV.

The believer finishes his course, and enters into rest.

THE believer is now happily arrived at the verge of life. *Goodness* and mercy have followed him all his days, and will

not lose their glory by forsaking him at the close of them. It is appointed unto all men once to die, and his fixed time is at hand. This body is returning to dust, and the spirit must appear before the throne of God. In this trying hour he trusts to the principles which had carried him through life, and he finds them a perfect preservative from the fear and from the power of death. The same faith in a reconciled God and loving Father keeps peace in his conscience, and love in his heart. He depends upon the atonement of Immanuel, and is safe: he wraps himself up in the robe of Immanuel's righteousness, and is happy. He knows he shall be found in Jesus, when he stands before God; and therefore he looks upon death as his friend, and meets it with a hope full of glory and immortality.

This is the privilege of believers in Jesus. They die in peace. Their principles are mighty, through God, to support and comfort them in the hour of death. Reader, are these principles thine? Examine carefully. Come to a point in this matter; for it is of infinite and eternal moment. What is thy state! Art thou prepared to die? Perhaps thou art openly profane. And what wilt thou do upon thy death-bed, when the divine law accuses thee, justice condemns thee, and the terrors of hell take hold of thee? The stings of guilt, at such a time, will be worse in the conscience than all the tortures that the sick body can possibly feel. But if thy conscience be asleep, O what a dreadful death! if thou go out of the world with thine eyes shut, and open them not till thou find the flames of hell about thee!

Perhaps thou art not afraid, because thou hast a decent outside: O take care of trusting in thyself, lest thou shouldst have thy portion with the openly profane. If thou make what thou art, or hast, any ground of thy hope before God; if thou depend on thy duties, or righteousness, or join them with the work of Christ, and meet death in this confidence; how dreadful will be thy mistake! how inevitable thy ruin: such false hopes are thus described: 'Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, and compass yourselves about with sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled'—but mind the end—thus saith the Lord: 'This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.' And together with them will the open enemy of God and his Christ lie down. A denier of revelation is brought to the bed of languishing—a slow lingering distemper is carrying him off—the *physician has* given him over—his disease is mortal, and he is

convinced of it. But, alas! he has no preparation for death and judgment. He has some Christian friends, and they talk freely to him about his eternal state; but he will hear nothing of his guilt, or of his want of a Saviour. They get a minister of Christ to visit him, and he speaks to him of sin, which is the transgression of the holy law, and of the justice of God, which is engaged to give transgressors their due, and of the impossibility of his finding mercy at the judgment-seat, until every demand be satisfied, which law and justice have upon him: he tries to persuade the dying man of the godhead of Jesus, and of the divine work of Jesus; but in vain. He sets at nought the minister's advice, and with a hardened and impenitent heart replies—Be it as it will with me in eternity, I'll have nothing to do with your Christ. So he died. We need not follow him to the judgment-seat, to know what became of his soul. The infallible record has declared what will be the portion of the unbelieving. Their misery is as certain as the truth of God. O reader, examine thyself; for he that believeth not is condemned already: because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

Perhaps thou art in name a Christian, but what thinkest thou of Christ? The grand heresy of this day is about his person, and if thou art fallen into it, there is no hope in thy death. Is he Jehovah? O leave not this matter undetermined. The truth of his word and the glory of his work depend entirely upon this one point: so does thy peace and comfort: for if thou believe him to be any thing but the self-existent God, thou shalt die in thy sins. His sufferings cannot avail for thy pardon, nor his obedience for thy righteousness, unless he be Jehovah. Without faith in him, as the self-existent Saviour, death will find thee under guilt, and judgment will leave thee among the enemies of God and his Christ.

Whatever evil there is in death to terrify, whatever pain to hurt, the blessed Jesus, by the grace of God tasted it for all his. The grace of the Father gave him to be the surety for his people unto death. He died for them, and as truly tasted death as ever the nicest palate tasted meat or drink. But it was like a taste—of short duration—it was not possible that he should be holden long under the bands of death. He rose again on the third day; and because he lives, believers in him shall live also. They are partakers of his victory over death, *and share* in all its blessings. The sentence of the broken *law is repealed*. They do not die to bear the punishment of

sin. Christ sustained that. The pains and agonies of death fell upon him; 'The sorrows of death (says he) compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me.' He was a just man, who had no reason to fear death; but being found in the place of his people, with their sins upon him, he was to bear every thing that was dreadful in death. Hence his agonies at the approach of it: 'My heart (says he) is sore pained within me, and the terrors of death are fallen upon me: fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.' He endured those inconceivable horrors to deliver them, who, through fear of death, had been all their lifetime subject to bondage. But the bondage is at an end, when they believe in his victory. Their fears are dispelled, when they see the glory of the battle which he fought and won—how by dying he took away sin, satisfied justice, removed the curse, conquered death, broke its sceptre, took out its sting, and left nothing in it but what is friendly to them. In these believing views they can meet death with confidence: for they cannot taste that in death which Christ tasted. He felt it that they might not feel it: he died in agonies, that they might die in peace. O my most loving and precious Jesus, I believe this, let not any unbelief in me dishonour thy complete conquest over all that is fearful or painful in dying. My times are in thy hand: when thou art pleased to bring them to an end, let me find death swallowed up in victory: O that I may then triumph with thy redeemed—What can separate us from the love of Christ—shall the sting of death, or the fear of death, or of Satan, or of hell? No; thanks be to God—these were all conquered when Jesus died; subdued for ever when he rose again. And he has left us many precious promises, that we, trusting in him, shall share in his victory, and find the blessings of it in the hour of death.

Attend then, O my soul, to what he has engaged to bestow upon his dying disciples, as the fruit of his death; and give him credit, not doubting but he will make it good. Live now in the comfort of his promises, and fear not. The Almighty Jesus will be with thee, and thou shalt conquer with him in the hour of death. Observe his word, which cannot be broken; 'I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plague: O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.' The ransom which he here engages to pay for his he paid as their surety, and he daily applies it to them, *as their Saviour.* Upon quoting this promise, and finding, by

faith, the happy fulfilment of it, mark how the apostle rejoices with the Corinthians, in the near view of death: 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. O thou most glorious conqueror, almighty Jesus, eternal thanks be to thee, that the law cannot accuse, sin cannot condemn, death cannot sting thy redeemed. Thou hast promised to make them happy in death, and faithful is thy word. The beloved John is one of thy witnesses: 'I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.' Write it for the use of my disciples, that it may be the ground of their faith when they come to die: I promise to make them blessed in their death: being *in* me, members under me their head, and living *in* the Lord, they shall die *in* the Lord: they shall have union with me, and communion too, when they are dying: the hour of death, the time of their dissolution, shall be a season of great blessedness; they shall have my presence in their last moments: I will walk with them through the valley of the shadow of death, and they shall fear no evil; my rod and my staff shall then comfort them. O my God, make thy word good. Sweet Jesus, write this promise upon my heart. O help me to mix faith with it, that when mine appointed time is come, I may experience the blessedness of dying in the Lord. I wait for the time, it is not far off. O keep me, Jesus, till that hour; keep me, Jesus, in that hour. Save me through life and death, and bless me with thine eternal salvation. Hear, and answer, for thy mercies' sake. *Amen.*

Meditate, O my soul, upon these blessings. Consider how great, how many they are. Consider also thine unworthiness —Thou art less than the least of them: and God has set his love upon thee, and has given thee the greatest of them. He has called thee to the knowledge of his love in Jesus, and hast shed it abroad in thy heart. He has set thee in the way that leads to the eternal enjoyment of his love, has promised to keep thee all the way, and to bless thee at the end of it. He will make thee blessed in death, and blessed for evermore. Hitherto thou hast found him faithful. Not one good thing has failed, which thou didst ask in faith, and wait for at his hands. Review all his dealings with thee, and see what infinite mercy there was in them. He made thy walk prosperous, thy warfare successful, thy crosses sanctified. Thou *hast not* taken a false step, but when thou wast not living by

the faith of the Son of God. O trust him then, and be not afraid. His love has brought thee thus far: he has led thee in the right way to the verge of life, and he declares he will not leave thee nor forsake thee in the hour of death. Fear not to look down; fear not to go down with Jesus into the grave. He has promised, 'I will be with thee;' and wherever he is, there is heaven. He is with his dying friends, and they are blessed indeed. They die in faith; they live by faith in death; and as soon as faith ceases, they live with their God for ever. The body falls asleep, and rests safely till the morning of the resurrection. The soul in a moment enters into the joy of its Lord—a joy like his—pure and holy—a fulness of joy—every sense has its proper object—enjoys it—and is satisfied for ever. O what will the heart feel in this blessedness! What acknowledgments will it make to God and the Lamb. To praise him for the wonders of his grace, in bringing to that glory, will be the happy employment of eternity. To see him as he is, in his divine majesty, is heaven. For how great communications of his love the being ever with him, and ever like him, will make the soul capable of, we cannot perfectly conceive. These things are at present too high and heavenly, even for our thoughts. By faith we sometimes have a little glimpse of the glory to be revealed, and it eclipses all the grandeur of the world. There are happy moments when we are permitted to behold the King in his beauty, when he discovers his matchless loveliness, and gives us a taste of the heavenly feast: at such blessed seasons the soul is bowed down, and humbled to the dust, adoring the infinite mercy and goodness of God. If there be so much of heaven in these manifestations of divine love, what must the full enjoyment be? We may suppose a happy soul, entered into rest, thus meditating upon the grace which brought it to that glory.

Blessings and thanks without ceasing be unto Father, Son, and Spirit, through whose sovereign grace I was chosen to this blessedness, and am now brought to the perfect and everlasting enjoyment of it. This communion with the godhead, through Jesus, is as far beyond my former thoughts of it, as the heaven is above the earth—how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty, that the most High and Holy One would thus communicate his love unto sinful creatures. Glory be to thee, holy Father, for predestinating me to the adoption of children, and for the free gift of the heavenly inheritance. Glory be to thee, incarnate Jehovah, for thy covenant undertakings for me; for thy life, death, and complete salvation.

worship thee, I glorify thee, O God the Holy Ghost, for quickening me, for teaching me, and enabling me, through believing in Jesus, to experience the love of the Father, and for bringing me to enjoy his endless blessings. Surely the goodness and mercy of the holy Trinity have followed me all the days of my life; were with me when I walked through the valley of the shadow of death; and are now my most blessed portion in the house of the Lord. I am made a pillar in the temple of my God, and am to go no more out. O what exceeding riches of grace are these! What has God done for me! Angels and brethren, help me to praise. My debt is immense. No saved sinner can owe him more: it is growing every moment. My praises pay none of it. With my thankful heart, and it is all thankfulness, I only acknowledge his infinite goodness, and own myself his eternal debtor. Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever.

Reader, art thou in the way which leads to this glory? If not, may the Lord be merciful unto thee, and bring thee unto it.

If thou art seeking to be set right in it, remember Jesus is *the way*. May his good Spirit enable thee to believe in his word, and to trust in it, till thou attain to the salvation of thy soul.

If thou art in the way, and hast communion with the Father, through faith in the atonement and righteousness of his Son, art thou maintaining it in thy daily walk, and improving it in every duty? and art thou going on thy way rejoicing in God? If thou art sorrowing for outward crosses, or burdened with inward conflicts, canst thou nevertheless find joy and peace in believing? Dost thou march on victorious in thy warfare, keeping up communion with God against all opposition of thy spiritual enemies? and is thy faith established upon the faithfulness of God, that he will carry on his own work in thee unto the day of the Lord Jesus? In this faith art thou now living? and in this faith dost thou hope to die? Has God indeed done these wonders for thee? O bless him then with me, and let us magnify his name together. Be thou exalted, Lord, in us, and by us. Every day we would grow up into nearer and holier communion with thee. We desire to be more like thee, and to shew forth more of thy lovely image before men. O help us to praise thee better with our *lips* and lives. By the communion of the Holy Ghost we *would* communicate more by faith with the Son in his salva-

tion, and with the Father in his love. O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, in this divine fellowship we hope to find our heaven upon earth: let it be growing and increasing, helped forward by all means, and, if it please thee, by this Treatise. Make it, Lord, the instrument under thee of leading thy people into the right way, and of establishing them in it. Accompany the reading of it with the teaching of thy Spirit, and to the advancement of thy glory. I present the book unto thee, ever-glorious Jesus, and lay it at thy feet. Thou knowest my heart: accept it graciously, as a public acknowledgment for inestimable mercies. In thy great compassion overlook the faults in it: what is agreeable to the Scripture is thine own. Make use of it to thy praise. I devote myself, my body and soul, my tongue and pen, all I have and am, to thy service. I would not look upon myself as any longer mine own; but, being bought with a price, I would glorify thee in the use of all thy gifts and graces. With thee I desire to walk through life. In thine arms I hope to die. Through thee I expect soon to enjoy perfect communion with the Father and the Spirit: therefore into thy hands I commend myself. Keep me in the right way. Guide me to the end of it, that I may finish my course with joy, and join thy redeemed in giving to thee, with the Father and the Spirit, the three in one Jehovah, equal and everlasting praise. Hear, Lord, and answer, *Amen.*

END OF THE WALK OF FAITH.

PREFACE

TO THE

TRIUMPH OF FAITH.

THE present Treatise is a continuation of some remarks formerly published concerning the experience of a true Christian, who, quickened by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, lives by faith, and who is enabled to go forward in his walk by the faith of the Son of God. There was one volume upon this subject, entitled, 'The Life of Faith;' and, some years after, two volumes on 'The Walk of Faith:'* in which the divine helps and supports were considered great and many, not only for the establishment of believers in the way, but also for their happiness every step of it, that they might rejoice in the Lord always, yea, with such a fulness of joy, as to make them triumph in the God of their salvation.

This is the grand gospel privilege, which is granted to believers, as believers, and promised to them in the freest and fullest manner that any grant can be conveyed, springing from sovereign grace in the Giver, and received not from any qualification in themselves, but entirely from his own bounty, continued and increased with all the rich and ripe fruits of faith, to the praise of the glory of the grace of God.

It has been long observed, and much lamented, that there are very few of these happy believers, who give such a perfect credit to the promises of God in Christ, as to rest their hearts upon his faithfulness, without any doubt or wavering: they do not trust so far as the promises warrant them, which stops the exercise of faith, and hinders the growth of the spiritual life. Weak faith has little fruit. Strong faith improves love to God, loving obedience, patient suffering, persevering warfare, and the other fruits of the Spirit: indeed, for this very purpose it is commanded, that we might trust and not be afraid: and there are promises made to them who obey the command, and all things promised are possible to them who believe: for there is strength sufficient in the promiser to make faith grow, yea, to make it grow exceedingly: and he has done it, giving us a happy instance in the church of the Thessalonians, in which persecution raged, but faith was victorious, and patience triumphant. It has pleased God to give us in the Scriptures many encouragements for the growth of faith, which are in the following Treatise set before the reader; that we may honour his word,

* The Author alludes to the separate mode in which the three pieces (now collected into one volume) were originally published—his precise words are still preserved.

and trust in it at all times, especially when appearances make against their being fulfilled. Then it is high worship, against hope to believe in hope, as the father of the faithful did: and they are his children, and follow the steps of his faith, who, when sin is felt in its defilement, in its guilt, in the sense of inward corruptions, and of strong temptations, in the many troubles of life, in the infirmities of age, and in the approach of death, put their whole trust and confidence in the promises of God. Nothing else is appointed, either to bring in the peace of God to the conscience, or to keep it in. God only in such trials can be a safe refuge, and a sure defence; and faith, looking at what he has engaged to give, secures the promised help to the glory of God. Under these several heads something is here offered from the Scriptures of truth to encourage a more steadfast reliance on the Divine faithfulness, than one commonly meets with. And what is said upon each head is here set before the reader, on the authority of God's word, and is also followed with fervent prayer, that the end of publishing this Treatise may be answered, even, that the Scriptural faith may be hereby increased, that it may abound yet more and more, and in such a great degree, as may bring the highest glory to God, the truest holiness to the heart, and the happiest experience in the life, and in the welfare of the Christian. May the gracious Lord, who is the author and finisher of the faith, accompany it with his Spirit to the advancement of his own praise, and to the edification of his own people. To him who keepeth promise for ever, be glory in the church, through Christ Jesus, world without end. Amen.

THE

TRIUMPH OF FAITH.

CHAP. I.

'WHERE there has been war, a triumph supposes a battle to have been fought, a victory to have been obtained, and the great rejoicings of the conquerors upon this occasion. The Christian has his matter of triumph, but it is spiritual. It is always in Christ, the Captain of his salvation. So it is written—'Thanks be to God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ.' The apostle is speaking of his preaching the gospel. He carried the sweet savour of Jesu's name from place to place; but it was not always received as a joyful sound, nor welcomed as it deserved. He met with great opposition. The Holy Ghost witnessed, that in every city bonds and afflictions awaited him. As these abounded, grace did much more abound. For he was carried on through persecutions, imprisonment, stoning, whipping, perils of various kinds, suffered for Christ, and Christ made him victorious over them all. He not only enabled Paul to conquer, but also made him more than conqueror—he was the blessed instrument of pulling down the strong holds of sin and Satan, and of setting up in the world that kingdom of Jesus, which is flourishing to this day, and which will triumph to eternity. A poor weak man had all the Roman empire against him, but he did wonders. Through Christ strengthening him, he went on conquering and to conquer: and to Christ he gives all the glory; acknowledging that the gospel, his preaching it, and the success of it, was of God—the excellency of the power was of God. 'Thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ.' He, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate, that as our surety he might live, and die, and conquer for us. It was to the everlasting honour of his grace and mercy, that he would engage in this war, and undertake to deliver his people from the tyranny of their enemies. They were in bondage to sin—sold under *sin*—*enslaved* to divers lusts and pleasures—living

cording to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the wicked spirit, who now worketh effectually in the children of disobedience. These tyrants were leading them captive at their will, hoping soon to have them delivered over to death, and then to everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. In this miserable state, under sin—under condemnation, we all were—guilty and helpless—not only without any means of deliverance in our own power, but without any desire of it, being tempted to dream of liberty, while we were tied and bound with the chain of our sins, and fancying that we were free even while our enemies were waiting to exercise their utmost malice against us, by binding us with chains of everlasting darkness. O what mercies—what compassions are in our God—in our Jesus! He remembered us in this our low estate, and manifested the exceeding riches of his grace, in coming from heaven to save his people from their sins. To this end Jehovah was manifested in the flesh, as it is written, (Jer. l. 33, 34.) 'The children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together, and all that took them captives held them fast, and refused to let them go: but their Redeemer is strong, the Lord of hosts is his name, he shall thoroughly plead their cause.' He made all our enemies his own, and fought our battles against them. He obeyed, that the broken law which stood against us might be magnified by his obedience: the penalties of it he endured, when the Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all. His cross was his triumphal chariot, on which he vanquished all our foes. (Col. ii. 14, 15.) He blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us, and he took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross: and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in that same cross. By dying on it he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and by his rising from the dead on the third day, according to the Scriptures, he overcame death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. And now as God man in one Christ, the almighty Saviour of his redeemed, he is seated upon his throne of grace, all his enemies being made his footstool, he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. Such was the battle which the Redeemer fought. Such was the victory which he obtained. The important news of it is *the* substance of that blessed gospel, which he ordered his apostles to preach to every creature, and which he promised

to assist them in, and to be with them for that purpose, to the end of the world. He is as good as his word to this day. Still faith cometh by hearing it. The Holy Spirit witnesses to it, that it is the truth of God, and he applies it, and makes it the power of God unto salvation. He enables the hearers to mix such faith with it that they receive, and enjoy, the happy fruits of Christ's victory. Once they were dead in trespasses and sins, but now Christ hath quickened them. They were guilty, and bound over to condemnation, but the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath freed them from the law of sin and of death. Once they walked after the course of this world, but now they walk with God. Their old enemies are still fighting against them, and watching for their destruction, but they are enabled to gain daily victory over them, over the world, the flesh, and the devil, through the strength of Jesus, and through the power of his might. Their wants are many, and they are daily made more sensible of them, but they have an abundant supply of every thing that pertains to life and godliness, out of the infinite fulness of God their Saviour.

Thus far the three volumes went which were formerly published upon this subject, entitled, 'The Life of Faith,' and 'The walk of Faith.' The present Treatise relates to the improvement of the former doctrines, considering the Scripture motives and encouragements for the believer's rejoicing always in the Lord, and triumphing in the God of his salvation. The ground of his triumph is the work of Christ: his warrant to depend upon it is the word of Christ: and his actual dependance is the work of the Spirit of Christ. Building upon these principles, he is commanded to go on from faith to faith, still pressing forward that he may see more clearly the glory of the person, and the glory of the work of Christ, what he is to trust to for his title to salvation, and for the things which accompany salvation, and may by every day's experience be growing into a more settled dependance upon the word of Christ, and upon his faithfulness to fulfil it; and thereby may be learning to expect constant supplies, and, according as his faith increases, receiving greater supplies of the power of the Spirit of Christ: that the God of hope may fill him with all joy and peace in believing, that he may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost; and we have an enouraging example in the Thessalonians who had great trials, and met them with great faith. The apostle commended it *highly, but by practice* it had so improved, that having occa-

sion to mention it some time afterward, he says—'We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly.' We have the same promises, and the same helps, as they had—promises exceeding great, and exceeding precious, containing a free grant in Christ of all spiritual blessings—a full warrant to make use of them for life and godliness, with commands and encouragements to trust and not be afraid of any enemies, or of any dangers: because he is faithful who has promised to be with them—to guide them with his counsel—to keep them safe by his power—to bless them with his love—and never to leave them nor forsake them: so that in all difficulties and troubles, they may go on their way rejoicing, until faith and patience have done their perfect work. To this purpose, a divine, whose praise is in all the churches, has given his testimony: 'It is an everlasting spring of comfort and encouragement unto the people of God, both in prayer and unto prayer: they pray to him, who is mighty, mighty to do what they pray for. The Lord's promises are our richest inheritances, and that not only because he hath promised greater and better things, than are in the compass of any man's power to make good, or in the compass of any man's understanding to comprehend; but because he will certainly be as good in performance as he hath been in promise: for he is in one mind concerning all that he hath promised: he will be merciful as he hath promised, and pardon sin as he hath promised, and sanctify all our troubles, as he hath promised: he will give us his Spirit, as he hath promised, and save us eternally, as he hath promised.' A great layman thus confirms the same truth—'Were God but believed in what he says, all the temptations of Satan, and the doubtings of our unbelieving hearts, would be silenced and brought to nothing. What exceeding folly is it in our hearts, that God, who never deceived any that trusted in him, should be distrusted by any, and not believed by all. He is the God of truth: so is his word the word of truth. And not any soul, that ever tried God by trusting him upon his word, but found him so. Oh then take God's word, and our hearts will be quiet. Though the heathen do rage, yet they imagine but a vain thing. In this glorious doctrine, free grace in God is the fountain, full satisfaction to divine justice the way, but perfect salvation and redemption to all his elect body in Christ the end. And truly when a soul can say, My Beloved is mine, and I am his, he hath spoken all at once. I know no other light nor rule, but

the Word and Spirit, to make out any thing of God to any soul: the glory of the great day will be—God is mine, and I am his.'

CHAP. II.

Some Scripture encouragements for the triumph of faith.

All the Old Testament words which we translate triumph, signify great joy, felt in the heart, and expressed outwardly in word or deed; a jubilee of joy, even joy in the highest, as near as it can be to the joy of heaven. In the New Testament the word is used but twice. First, for what Christ engaged to do for us; and, secondly, for what Christ engaged to do in us. For us he undertook to fight our battles against all our enemies—sin, the world, Satan, death and hell: and the Captain of our salvation has gained a complete victory, and had a most glorious triumph over them in his own person, when he blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and he took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross: and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in that same cross. And he still goes on conquering and to conquer. By the preaching of his cross and passion, his resurrection and ascension, he is to this very day exalting the honours of his victory and triumph in the hearts and lives of his redeemed, giving them such a share in his conquests, that they ought to be ever praising him with joyful lips—'Now thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ.' This was the apostle's happy experience. He found that the gospel, and his preaching of it, and the great success which attended it, were the fruits of Christ's presence with him, and blessing upon him: therefore to him he gave all the glory. So do we still. We see the triumphs of the cross spread far and wide, and we praise him for our day of gospel grace. The crucified Saviour in his majesty rides on prosperously in the chariots of salvation, and his enemies fall under him. In the day of his power he makes them a willing people. They submit to his sceptre, and acknowledge him to be their Lord, and their God. Under his banner they fight the good fight of faith, and they daily conquer, yea, they are more than conquerors through him who loveth them, crowned conquerors in glory everlasting. Thus it appears that the triumph of the Head includes the triumph of his members.

The fountain from whence springs their present and their eternal joy, is God—God in Christ. They glory in the victories of the God-man; because of his commandment; because of his free promise, which is a perfect warrant for the fullest confidence; and because of his goodness, truth, and power, which are bound to fulfil all his engagements. Looking to these infallible securities, the believer's heart is established, trusting in the Lord. Being of the true circumcision, he would put no confidence in the flesh, but would be daily crucifying it with its affections and lusts, and bringing all high thoughts of self to the obedience of Christ. If he has been long standing in the faith—an old Christian—if he has received much consolation from his Lord—or has been very active and successful in his service; his trust is never in himself. The ground of his believing is always one and the same. He has no new doctrine to learn: no new warrant to encourage him to believe. The word of God—Thus saith the Lord, is always sufficient; and ought to draw forth the fullest credit, that can possibly be given to the testimony of the God of truth. What was advanced before in the 'Life of Faith,' and in the 'Walk of Faith,' is taken for granted in the present Treatise. Here is no new doctrine. Salvation is in Christ Jesus, and in no other: I am (says he) *the truth*, the one saving truth, like himself, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. One Lord, one faith, one salvation. And whoever believes this aright is in a safe state, in which there is no change with respect to God; no variableness, or shadow of turning. Whatever his own apprehensions may be, the word of the Lord endureth for ever. He may be tempted in a legal hour to cast away his confidence, but the counsel of the Lord shall stand. He may change; but I, saith God, change not: for the gracious gifts and calling of God are without repentance—they are such, that it cannot repent him of bestowing them, or of continuing them, when once bestowed. As the believer has no new truth to learn, only to improve the principles of the doctrine of Christ: so he has no new title to expect. Under the free grant and gift of God, salvation comes to him of grace, in the most sovereign way that can be conceived. And his warrant to receive it is the Divine command; and when he has been enabled to receive it by the obedience of faith, the divine promise assures him, that he shall not perish for his sins, but that he shall have everlasting life. *Believing* the promise is the best title that possibly can be to this *salvation*; for we are saved freely by grace, through faith, and

that not of ourselves, neither salvation nor faith; both are the gifts of God. And under the title all the blessings which accompany salvation are included, all the things which are freely given to us of God—a sufficiency of present grace and the full possession of eternal glory. This is the good old foundation, upon which the heirs of promise have always built their faith and hope. They knew, that all fulness was in Christ for their use and enjoyment: and they were persuaded, that they should honour him most, by believing this with the strongest certainty. They could not trust too soon, nor too much, to his faithfulness. And therefore they come boldly to the throne of grace, that they may receive out of his fulness at all times, for all things, for body and soul, for earth and heaven, what they wanted, and what he had promised. The more they live thus by faith, they will experience more occasion to rejoice in the Lord: and to find that his arm to fulfil will always go as far as his promise, even to bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ. This indeed is strong faith, but it is the gift of a strong God: it does not depend, in the least, on what the believer can do for himself, but on what the Almighty has engaged to do for him, and in him, and by him: for he requires and commands it in this high degree: there is grace sufficient to bring it into use and practice, as far as the commands go, all things promised being possible to him that believeth; and they who have trusted most to the faithfulness of God, who against hope believed in hope, have experienced that God did never leave them nor forsake them. He magnified his word above all his name. There he has made his name to shine forth, and all his attributes are magnified in their greatest perfection. The believers on earth, and the saints in heaven, praise God for his word: because it is the instrument of his Spirit, by which he bestows grace, and, according to which, he gives glory. The fulfilling of his word runs through time, and will run through eternity. Blessed be God for his word of promise; blessed be the Lord, that it will be fulfilling for ever and ever. This being the case, it becomes necessary to inquire into the divine records, and to see what a full warrant God has given us to trust and not be afraid: and this to every believer; there being the same ground to believe with the strongest faith, as to believe at all.

This inquiry is the more necessary, because of the place which faith holds in our religion. It reaches to the whole of it: *so that nothing is good before God, however fair and spe-*

cious it may appear to men, without it. The conscience, the heart, and its affections, are purified only by faith. All duties, for their right motive, and for their acceptance, depend upon it. Without faith it is impossible to please God. No trials and afflictions can be patiently and profitably endured, unless faith be in exercise. Our whole warfare is carried on and can be, by our being strong in the Lord, and fighting in the power of his might, finished victoriously only by faith. Indeed, it enters so much into every thing wherein we have to do with God, that the strengthening of it is the strengthening of every other grace; which are weak or vigorous according as more or less faith enters into them. And therefore the Scripture-encouragements for our growth in faith, should be well weighed with much prayer, frequent meditation, and thanksgiving, that they may have their proper effect upon the believer's heart and life. And as this can be done only by power from on high, assistance must ever be sought from thence, and depended upon. The Holy Spirit is the very breath of spiritual life, and of all spiritual activity. Every godly motion of the heart is from his holy inspiration. So the Scripture teaches: (2 Cor. iii. 5.) 'Not that we (even apostles) are sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.' So we are taught to pray: 'O Lord, from whom all good things do come, grant to us, thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.' Fifth Sunday after Easter. And again, the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity. 'O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee: mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'

A great divine has thus expressed the same sentiments.

'In those who are truly converted, all saving truths are transcribed out of the Scripture into their hearts. They are taught of God; so as they find all truths, both concerning the estate, and the gracious and happy estate of man, in themselves. They carry a body of divinity in them, and about them; so as from a saving feeling they can speak of conversion, of grace, of the Spirit, &c. and from this acquaintance are ready to yield and give up themselves to truth revealed, and to God speaking by it. And thus a man may know his estate before God, by his relish for the word. There is a heavenly and *divine* relish in the word of God, as for instance—Take the *doctrine* of his providence, that all things shall work together

for the best to them that love God. What a sweet word is this! A whole kingdom is not worth this promise—That whatever befalls a Christian in this world, there is an overruling Providence to sway all to good, to help forward his eternal good—that Christ will be present with us in all conditions—that he will give us his Holy Spirit—that when we confess our sins, and lay them open, he is merciful to forgive them—That if our sins were red as scarlet, they shall be white as wool. What kind of incredible sweetness is in these to a heart that is prepared for these comforts? The doctrines of reconciliation, of adoption, of glory to come, of the offices of Christ, and such like, how sweet are they! They relish wonderfully to a sanctified soul. These truths, that come out of the mouth of Christ, and out of the ministry concerning Christ, they are most sweet of all. Oh how sweet were these words to the poor man—"Thy sins are forgiven thee"—Do you think they went not to his heart? The best discovery of a true affection to Christ, and of a true state in grace, is from our affection to the word of Christ. Wherever there is an interest in Christ, there is a high respect to the word.'

A believer, trusting to these helps, and making a diligent use of these means, in reading the charter of grace, will find such a faith frequently described and required, as relies on the truth of God without doubt or wavering, as depends on his faithfulness to his promises with the fullest confidence of the heart, and waits on his fulfilling them, steadfastly persuaded, that he has spoken nothing with his mouth but what he will infallibly make good with his arm.

All the gifts and graces of God come to us in his promises, and cannot be received or enjoyed, but in the way of believing. What then can be a greater encouragement not to stagger at any promise through unbelief, than that God has declared it is a service well pleasing and acceptable to him. It is high worship, to be strong in faith, giving glory to God: for it is a gift of his love, and a grace of his Spirit, and his own special work in the hearts of his people. In the day of his power he makes them willing, and he enables them to set their seal, that God is true. So we read—'By faith in Christ, Enoch walked with God, and he had this testimony, that he pleased God; but without this faith it is impossible to please him:' therefore Enoch's state, and his walk, and his translation, were all by faith. Now we know that the judgment of God is according to truth, and he has declared in the word of truth, that *whatsoever is not of* faith is sin. So that it is impossible it should

please a most holy God; who has magnified his word above all his name, and who delights to see his people do the same, magnifying it, by giving it the fullest credit of their hearts, and the most perfect dependence of their lives.

He has also required this by his express command: 'This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ,' who has said, 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me,' with the same faith, and with the same worship: and when the jailor inquired of Paul and Silas, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' they answered—'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' And this belief is commanded in very trying circumstances, when the outward supports of faith seem to fail, and the inward comforts are at a very low ebb: 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light: let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God,'—his God still. That relation is always the same: and so are the blessings which are included in it, and which he cannot fail to bestow upon them who honour his word in such trials of their faith, that against hope they believe in hope: for blessed are all they who put their trust in him.

For the farther confirmation of their faith, he has strengthened his commands with the most encouraging promises of grace to help in every time of need. Ask, and ye shall have: for he giveth to all askers liberally, and upbraideth not, come they ever so often, or ask ever so much: yea, our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him: and his influence goes as far as any promise; for he is the mighty power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Whatever is promised, he is almighty to fulfil. So we read when our Lord cursed the barren fig-tree, the apostles marvelled, that it presently withered away. Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done: and all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive;' for believing honours the truth of the Promiser, and asking in prayer for the fulfilling of it, engages and secures the promised grace. 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;' so much, that the prayer of faith *has* opened and shut heaven. It has done wonders in removing mountains of difficulties, and conquering bows of steel,

which rendered it seemingly impossible that the word of God should be established. But faith gained the victory, and triumphed gloriously.

It has pleased God also to confirm all these arguments, by revealing the motive, on which he made the promises. It was love. They are all free-grace promises. In his councils, in the revealing them, in the fulfilling them, love directs the whole. They are discoveries of what is in the Father's heart to his children, and are the means of conveying his fatherly blessings, especially such a persuasion of his love to them, as will work love to him, and they work by love. For we love him, because he first loved us: therefore he speaks to them comfortably, addressing himself to them in the tenderest compassion, and calling them by the dearest names:—his chosen —his beloved—his adopted—his children—his friends—heirs, heirs of God—joint-heirs with Christ, who is Lord of all—his peculiar treasure—his portion: these, and many other endearing names, are intended to convince them of his love, and to win and engage their hearts in love to him: that when it is given them to believe the truth of his promises, they might be certain of their fulfilment. God is love; he delighteth in his people. His heart is so set upon them, that in his dealings with them, love has the appointing, the directing, and the blessing of all. His love to them had no beginning, and it will have no end. It bestows on the happy objects of it, grace, and it secures to them glory. Love has crowned their Head; and love will crown all his members. For out of his fulness they are most freely invited to come, and take all spiritual blessings, as the earnest of eternal. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon them! who can believe it, and not love him again!

It has pleased God also to give us some examples of his singular favour to them who acted strong faith, and to whom he therefore administered strong consolation. The apostle says, that 'Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.' And then he prays, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, by the power of the Holy Ghost.' And when the Holy Ghost gives it this blessed effect, he always fills the heart with gratitude and thankfulness. Thus it operated in the day when the believer was enabled to say, 'O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou hast

comforted me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the fountain of salvation.' O what reviving cordials did the father of the faithful draw out of it! who against hope believed in hope, that he should become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken: 'So shall thy seed be: and being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body, now dead, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God:' and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. For this heroic faith, he is celebrated in Scripture, and proposed to us for an example. One of his children was enabled to follow the close steps of his faith, through a life of continual and great sufferings, and to triumph in the prospect of a violent death. 'I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing.'

We have another example given us in the fifty-sixth Psalm. On whatever occasion the prophet indited it, the Spirit of prophecy teaches us to apply it to the Son of David, who is Christ the Lord. It describes his great trials, and continual persecutions, and his invisible faith, by which he was carried through them, when all the world was against him. The whole Psalm is a prayer made up of the most perfect trust and confidence in the faithfulness of God to his word, and he assures himself that heaven and earth shall pass away, before one jot or tittle of it could fail. He had enemies many, mighty, cunning, cruel, united together to destroy him (Acts iv. 27.;) but his heart was established, trusting in the Lord. He read, he knew, he believed the promises made to him; and, without doubt or wavering, he waited for the fulfilling of them. Thus he viewed the Father's covenant engagements, who had declared; 'Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out, he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it: he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to *them that* walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in *righteousness*, and I will hold thy hand; I will keep thee,

and I will give thee for a covenant of the people,' &c. On this rock he built his faith, and could not be moved. 'The Lord God (says he) hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back: I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting: for the Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me, who will contend with me? Let us stand together. Who is mine adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold the Lord God will help me, who is he that shall condemn me? Lo, they all shall wax old as a garment, the moth shall eat them up.' What an undaunted courage is here manifested? In this spirit of faith he prays—

'Be gracious unto me, O God, because fallen man would devour me: all the day long he is fighting against me, and oppressing me: all the day long mine enemies would devour me: for they are many who fight against me, O thou Most High. In the day, when I might have reason to fear, I will put my trust in thee: I shall praise God because of his word: in God I have put my trust, I will not fear what flesh can do unto me: all the day long they torture my words: all their devices are against me for evil; they assemble together: they hide themselves: they watch my steps, as if they were waiting for my life: shall they escape for their wickedness? In thine anger, O God, thou wilt bring these people under: thou numberest my wanderings: thou hast put my tears into thy bottle: are they not recorded in thy register? In the day, when I shall pray unto thee, then shall mine enemies be driven back: this I know for certain, because God is on my side: I will praise God because of his word: I will praise Jehovah, because of his word: in God have I trusted, I will not fear what man can do unto me. Thy vows are upon me, O God. I will pay my thanksgivings unto thee; for thou hast delivered my life from death. Wilt thou not also keep my feet from falling, that I may be able to walk in the presence of of God, in the light of life everlasting?'

O what a perfect trust and confidence is this! and how loudly does it call upon us to look to his example, that God would give us grace to follow the steps of his faith. Observe, O my soul, and consider the pattern set before thee. He had God on his side—the promises—the power—the providences of the *Almighty.* He knew that every step was marked, every tear

noticed, and that God had them in the book of his remembrance. In this faith he met his trials, and came off triumphant. Notwithstanding his many weary steps, and his strong crying and tears under that sorrow, which never had its like, yet he knew that he should be heard—and he was heard; his enemies fell before him: but they rose and returned to the combat. Upon the word he casts his anchor again. He trusts to it; and he finds it firm and sure still. The storm is great; it continues; it increases: all thy waves and storms, says he to his God, are gone over me. But, my soul, trust thou still in the Lord; for my hope is in him. His word is my stay: it cannot be broken. I praise him for it, again I praise him for it. Trusting in it, now my fears are gone. God is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me. O what a pattern is here set for us! May the meditation upon it be useful. May the gracious Lord, who is the author and finisher of the faith, bless the means of his own appointing, for the strengthening of it. And in the use of them, looking up for the constant supplies of his Spirit, may he enable us to go on from strength to strength, keeping this example always in view, until he bring us in peace unto the end of our faith.

These are some of the Scripture grounds, upon which the 'Triumph of Faith' is built. It stands upon the almighty power of God, as engaged to fulfil his word: for his word is his deed. To take him at his word is the proper exercise of faith. He hath promised, and it is done. To rest thus upon it, as what cannot possibly fail, is the foundation of Christian worship: and when it is established in the heart, in the love of the truth, it constitutes the chief of that service, which is perfect freedom: for God has declared himself well pleased with our trusting to his truth and faithfulness. He has commanded us to do it without doubt or wavering. He has promised grace sufficient to enable us thus to believe, and we cannot put too much trust and confidence in his arm and power. And he has also given us examples of those, who honoured him with the fullest reliance of their hearts, and had reason to rejoice in the Lord, who keepeth promise for ever. Glory be to him for such encouragements of our faith. O that they may have their proper effect! May the Holy Ghost apply them by his grace, and give us such a faith, as may be well pleasing unto God: such a faith as he has commanded, and for the full exercise of which he has made exceeding great promises. Help us, O God of all grace, to trust and not be afraid; for thou art faithful: thy word and thy promises give us full security to

trust in the Lord at all times; because in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength: and blessed are all they who put their trust in him.

But by what ways and means shall these arguments and encouragements have their full effect? this is the main point, and is settled beyond dispute upon Scripture authority. The same Spirit who revealed the promises, is also the fulfiller of them: and he is almighty. The blessing on the use of the means is entirely from him: it is he who teacheth man knowledge; and from him we are to seek it in prayer. With all our reading, hearing, studying, meditating upon the Scriptures, we must look up to him for his divine teaching. 'If any of you, believers, lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all askers liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him;' but let him ask in faith. Here is a command and a promise. When we lack wisdom, which we always do, as much as we want breath, we are to ask it of the Spirit of wisdom, and it shall be given us. He will make us wise unto salvation. He will keep us in the use of means dependant on his leading us into all useful truth, and of his revealing to us the things which are freely given to us of God, to shew them to us, as realities, and to put us into the enjoyment of them, as blessings. In this dependance on him, we live, and move, and have our being. Our spiritual life and faculties, and the exercise of them, and the improvement of them, are entirely from his influence. For the apostle, mentioning the several gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, says, 'All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man his own gifts, according to his own will.' To him then we are to look up for every good gift, and every perfect gift. Whenever we open the Bible we should ask his light and his teaching. He is the chief commentator. He only can put the Scriptures into our inward parts, and write them upon our hearts, so that we may experience them to be the power of God unto our own salvation. Our first reformers were of this sentiment, exhorting us to pray, that by the holy inspiration of God's Spirit, we may think those things that be good, and by his merciful guiding, may perform the same. 'Grant to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the Spirit, to think, and do always such things as be rightful: that we, who cannot do any thing that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.' Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

As they prayed, so they sung: for we meet with the

hymns, inserted by the reformers in the Common Prayer Book, appointed to be sung at the ordaining of priests, and at the consecration of bishops. The first begins with these words—

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire, &c.

Out of the second I quote some verses, not for any excellency of the poetry, but for the soundness of the divinity expressed in these lines—

Come, Holy Ghost, eternal God,
Proceeding from above,
Both from the Father and the Son,
The God of peace and love.

Visit our minds, and into us
Thy heav'nly grace inspire,
That in all truth and godliness
We may have true desire.

Thou in thy gifts art manifold,
Whereby Christ's church doth stand,
In faithful hearts writing thy law,
The finger of God's hand.

According to thy promise made,
Thou givest speech of grace,
That through thy help, the praise of God
May stand in every place.

O Holy Ghost, into our souls
Send down thy heavenly light,
Kindle our heart with fervent love,
To serve God day and night.

Strengthen and stablish our weakness,
So feeble and so frail,
That neither devil, world, nor flesh,
Against us may prevail.

Grant us, O Lord, through thee to know
The Father most of might,
That of his dear beloved Son,
We may attain the sight.

And that with perfect faith also,
We may acknowledge thee,
The Spirit of them both always,
One God, in persons three.

From these authorities, it appears to be the doctrine of the Scriptures, and of our reformers in harmony with them, that *spiritual life*, and knowledge, and faith in Christ, and hope in *him, that* maketh not ashamed, and holy love, with every

godly motion of the heart, come from the holy inspiration of God the Spirit. It is from him, that we understand the Scriptures, in the mind of the Spirit: it is from his grace that we grow in Scripture knowledge, and persevere in the use of means, and at the same time in a constant dependance on his presence in them, for the furtherance and joy of our faith. He begins, he carries on, and he perfects our learning in his revealed word and will. O that he may make us, and keep us, good scholars, in an abiding sense of the necessity of his divine teaching: that the Spirit and the word may go together in our Bible studies and Bible experience: so that this may be the daily prayer of our faith.

O thou Spirit of wisdom and revelation, who hast taught us that secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, open the eyes of our understanding to understand what is revealed in the Scriptures for our use. Dispose us to hear them, read them, and meditate on them, with profit. And help us to mix more faith with them, that they may become more precious: in every day's reading, grant that we may find them to be the ingrafted word, and that we are really branches grafted into the tree of life, and by the rain and shining of Heaven, enabled to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit abundantly. For all these blessings keep us ever dependant on thy divine teaching, that our fruits may grow richer and riper—we may be more humble in our hearts, and more thankful in our lives: and so we, who can learn nothing as we ought without thee, may by thy grace be made wise unto eternal salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus: to whom with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Spirit, be equal honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

CHAP. III.

The believer's triumph in the Lord his righteousness.

THE object of his rejoicing is always one and the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever, without any variableness, or shadow of turning. It is Christ, God in Christ, concerning whom the commandment runs—Rejoice in the Lord Jesus always, and again, I say, rejoice: there being in him a fountain of joy springing up into everlasting life. What he is in *his own wonderful* person—what is revealed of his gracious

works and ways in his dealings with the sinners of mankind —what he did for them in the days of his flesh—what he does in them by his Spirit in time—what he has promised to give them in eternity: in every possible view that can be taken of him, a believer may and ought to rejoice always, and that with a fulness of joy: for thus the apostle offers up his praise—'Now thanks be to God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ.' For he has in his person every possible subject of triumphant joy. He is true and very God; and he is true and very man—God and man in one Christ. The prophet Isaiah foretold this marvellous union, and gloried in the prospect: for us men, and for our salvation, a child is born, and a Son is given: and his name shall be called Wonderful, because the child is the mighty God, and the Son is the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. This is the great mystery of godliness, of which the saints in the Old Testament sang with the sweetest melody in their hearts unto the Lord, as the prophet does in the one hundred and forty-eighth Psalm, calling upon all in heaven and earth, with all their inhabitants, to join him in the praises of Immanuel: because his name alone is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth. So that New Testament saint felt it, who declared, that he accounted all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and I do account them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him—found so united to him as to be one with him: for he was united to our nature, in order to bring about another most blessed union. He taking our nature, that we might take his—he made the Son of man, that we might be made the sons of God—he having the power of an endless life, that he might give spiritual and eternal life to all believers! for they in the day of his power are joined to the Lord by one Spirit—the same Spirit in the members as in the Head—that through him their Head, they might be able to say, Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, by the bond of his Spirit. It is not possible for man to conceive higher things than our Lord has prayed for in these words: 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me: and the glory which thou gavest me, I *have given* them, that they may be one even as we are one.' *By virtue of* this union with Christ, who is the head over all

things to the church, his members have fellowship with him in his holy life: he is the Lord Jehovah their righteousness: for them he became subject to the law, and obedient to its precepts, born of a woman, and made under the law, that through his obedience many might be made righteous. 'Lo I come (says he) to *do* thy will, O God,' and he did it by fulfilling all righteousness. As the surety for his people, what he did, when he magnified the law, and made it infinitely honourable in all its demands, was for them, and for their justification, that it might be imputed unto them for righteousness, that they might be dealt with as righteous at the judgment-seat of God. In this the father of the faithful made his boast, and gloried all the day long: for we read, that he believed in God, and God imputed to him righteousness, loving him as his friend, and blessing him in all things. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead: for the children of believing Abraham are freely made heirs, as he was, of the righteousness which is by the faith of Jesus Christ. Hear one of them with what heart felt joy he celebrates his triumphant state in Christ! 'I will hope continually, and I will praise thee more and more—my mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness, and thy salvation all the day: for I know not the numbers thereof: I will go in the strength of the Lord God, I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.' He found the blessings flowing from it numberless and endless: so that it was all he wanted for his justification to life, and for his title to glory—it only. In the same Psalm, admiring and adoring the wonders of the gift of grace, he breaks out: 'Thy righteousness, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee?' He was so complete in this righteousness of Christ, that he would mix nothing with it for his free access to God, or for his full acceptance before God. He knew that this righteousness of faith was appointed of God, was the gift of his grace, and was all-sufficient, being an everlasting righteousness: and therefore it effectually removed the consciousness of sin from his heart, and enabled him to come boldly to the throne of grace, where he stood perfectly justified in Jesus. And in the same spirit we hear a New Testament saint resolving to exclude all glorying, except in Christ, and in his righteousness, 'in whom God can be just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? it is excluded. By what law? By

the law of works? Nay, but by the law of faith: therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law: and that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' This was the apostle's highest ambition, to be found in his precious Saviour. O that I may rejoice in him through life, and may be found in him at the hour of death, and at the day of judgment—found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Blessed testimony for Jesus—encouraging example, to place our whole trust and confidence in the Lord our righteousness, and our strength: for he is the same to us as he was to the apostle Paul, and we have as good reason to triumph as he had, because it is written, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and a bride adorneth herself with her jewels: for as the earth bringeth forth its bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations.' This is the righteousness of faith, and these are the fruits of it, which abound to the glory of God, even peace with him, joy in him, a holy walk with him, and a victorious warfare by him. 'In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.' Herein to glory is the believer's bounden duty. He is called to it, as his gospel privilege, and according to his faith he does triumph in it, as his present happiness, and as a good ground for his hope of eternal joy. Wonderful blessings are promised to this faith and hope, and they are truly experienced at this day. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for his providing such a garment for glory and beauty. He has warranted thee to put it on, and having through it free access into his presence, he has commanded thee to join that great multitude, whom no one can number, who are standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands, and who cry with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever.' Their robes are as white as the light, being washed clean in the blood of the Lamb, and through him they have conquered, as the palms in their hands denote: yea, are more than conquerors, having crowns of righteousness upon their heads, which can never fade away. For grace reigns through

righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. O what matter of triumph is here! a righteousness absolutely perfect and everlasting! This greatly enhances all our high joys in Christ, that there is full security for their continuance. It depends on the faithfulness of God to his word and promise, fixed in his eternal counsels, and established upon immutable things. 'Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord, and mine is an everlasting righteousness: lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.' The state of a believer is always one and the same on God's part. He may vary in his apprehensions of his state; but with God there is no variableness, or shadow of turning. He may be a believer walking in darkness—tempted to doubt, he may pay too much attention to sense and feeling—may get into a legal spirit—his evidences may be clouded—when outward things and providences seem to make against him, his faith may be sore tried, and he may stagger at the promises of God through some fit of unbelief—the man changeth, but God changeth not. His mercies are sure mercies. They cannot fail: for they spring from the ocean of grace, and are streams which no created power can cut off: but they shall infallibly return to it again, and shall bring with them all the happy objects of his love. The Father chose them, and gave them to his Son, who has all their names written in the Lamb's book of life: for them he lived and died; and when he presents them at the last day to the Father—'Behold I, and the children whom thou hast given me,' not one of them shall be wanting; for the Holy Spirit is by his office the Lord and giver of life to them, and in the day of his power he enables them to receive Jesus, and to live by faith upon him, as members united to, and in fellowship with, their glorified Head. This covenant of the blessed Trinity is unalterable, being ordered in all things and sure. All the subjects of its grace shall infallibly be saved according to our Lord's promise, and according to our Lord's prayer, *viz.* 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.' Trusting to these immutable securities the heirs of promise are commanded to draw strong consolation, even to rejoice in Jesus with a fulness of joy; in darkness as well as walking in

light—in winter as well as in summer—in adversity as well as in prosperity—in death as well as in life; because he has all power in heaven and earth to make good to them every covenant engagement. And he will do it: for the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and shall come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever.

O thou most blessed God and Saviour, thou art the Lord our righteousness and our strength. I believe that the whole Israel of God shall be justified only by thee, and in thee only shall they glory. O let thy Spirit abide with me to increase in me this faith, that by fresh supplies of his grace I may be kept from going about to establish my own righteousness, and may constantly submit myself to the righteousness of God. And by the same grace help me to bring forth the fruits of righteousness abundantly unto the glory and praise of God, magnifying thine atonement in the peace of my conscience, exalting thy righteousness in the love of my heart, and in my walk and warfare glorifying thy fulness; so that out of it I may be receiving a sufficiency of grace, by which I am now enabled to bless thee for the hope of glory. To thee, Almighty Jesus, for the work of righteousness, which is peace, and for the effect of righteousness, which is quietness and assurance for ever: to thee be everlasting praise. Amen and Amen.

CHAP. IV.

The believer's triumph in Jesus under a sense of the defilement of sin.

It is in virtue of this fellowship with Jesus, that believers are freely forgiven all their iniquities. His atonement was the work of our great High Priest, who was made sin for us, although he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. God is of purer eyes than to look upon the least iniquity: and there is a defilement in sin, which makes it exceedingly filthy and abominable in his sight. He shewed his utter abhorrence of it by establishing in the Old Testament such an abundance of legal pollutions, as might exhibit to sense the defiling nature of sin, and might keep it ever before their eyes, and fresh upon their minds. And by making it necessary, that the worshippers should be purified

from these pollutions, and by establishing the means of their purification, and by forbidding every other, he would lead them to exercise faith in the great purifier, whose office it was to purge their consciences, before they could offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. And it was a fixed law—That if any one legally unclean neglected or refused the appointed means of being cleansed, he was to bear his iniquity: for an unpardoned sinner can have no communion with a most holy God.

'Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled.' The mind is the fountain from whence all the streams flow. Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, &c. these are the things which defile the man. An enlightened conscience is made sensible of this, and feels the necessity of being purified from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, in order to approach God, and to have boldness and access with confidence to the throne of grace. His meditations at such times are like these:

The more I know of myself, the more I am led to loath myself, and to repent in dust and ashes: for I am a sinner, filthy and abominable altogether. By nature as vile as sin can render a fallen creature, and daily polluting myself in heart and life with fresh impurities. I have no means of cleansing myself: no hope, that any thing in the creation can do it for me. Deep in my very constitution the stain remains. And I am forced to be crying out—Unclean, unclean. My case would be quite desperate, if God himself had not provided a remedy, the report of which has come to mine ears in the gospel. O it is blessed news. I welcome it to mine heart: that God has opened a fountain, which cleanseth from all sin. He has recommended it to me, as having infinite virtue and everlasting efficacy to cleanse. And I have a command from heaven, vile and filthy as I am, to make use of it: for thus it is written—'In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.' When the Holy Spirit enables the sinner to believe the report, and to mix faith with it, then he has a warrant thus to pray—'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow—Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities—Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.' And the Lord hears and answers the prayer in these words—'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye

shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh: and I will put my Spirit within you, and I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them: I will also save you from all uncleanness.' The sacrifices from the beginning preached this blessed doctrine: their blood could sanctify by divine appointment to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purify the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Blessed, for ever blessed be his grace, who by this offering hath opened a fountain for sin and for uncleanness, in which the most polluted may wash and be clean: for Christ so loved the church as to give himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word: that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it might be holy and without blemish: for his blood has infinite virtue to purify the foulest sinner, even so to cleanse him, that he may be perfect for ever: and the great use of faith is to receive it, and to apply it, even as God himself has recommended it, and it has lost none of its virtue. To this very day, it purifies as perfectly as ever it did, and believers now in life, and in the hour of death, feel its divine efficacy, as truly as the martyred Stephen did. I find a dying Christian thus proclaiming his faith and hope in it, when heart and flesh were failing him. 'Am not I, my friends, a monument of God's rich, free grace, of his boundless love and mercy in Christ? O most extensive is the efficacy of his precious blood; for it has reached to me, one of the vilest of sinners: O here is boundless goodness, unfathomable love: this blood has washed clean my soul, the seat of defilement, that was as black as hell; purified my conscience, that was darker than the grave, and made it brighter than the light; in a word, this blood will make me, who was vile, most vile, a child of hell, an heir of wrath, holy before God, and fit to live with God, and the Lamb, with angels, and the spirits of good men made perfect, to all eternity, and in a few minutes my soul shall be made perfect also. O blessed, for ever blessed be God my Saviour: eternal praises be tendered unto thee.' This is true faith, and *high* honour put upon the blood of Jesus, to seal God's testimony concerning it. He hath set forth Jesus Christ to be a

propitiation through faith in his blood. Trusting to it, the foulest sins are washed as white as snow, and crimson sins as the purest wool. So the Beloved says to his church—'Behold, thou art fair, my love: behold thou art all fair, there is no spot in thee: thou art all glorious within.' No angel can be whiter or purer, or stand more accepted before God than he does who is washed in the blood of the Lamb. O blessed man who hast obtained redemption by it! thou art commanded to enter with boldness into the holiest by the blood of Jesus—the way is opened: thou art called to draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having thy heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and thy body washed with pure water, that thou mayest hold the profession of thy faith without wavering, as that great multitude did, who washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; they are now crying with a loud voice, 'Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever.' They triumph indeed; and so mayest thou. Thou hast the same reason as they have. The same fountain, which washes their robes, cleanses thine. The same promises that it will, and thou shalt stand before God without spot of sin unto eternal salvation, as perfect as they. Jesus is thy Saviour, as truly as he is theirs: even to-day, thy conscience purged from guilt, and thy heart purified by faith, thou mayest enter within the vail, and make sweet melody in thy heart unto the Lord thy God. Our elder brethren round his throne are employed in the same delightful work: we do it here as well as we can: they in heaven, and we on earth. The same subject in the church below, as well as above, and the same employment. We try to sing the praises of the worthy slaughtered Lamb in as high a note as they do. And when we fail we try again, praying the Holy Spirit to enable us to keep in tune with them, that our songs may be daily more spiritual and heavenly. A poet of our own, feeling something of this harmony, would have us to celebrate the triumphs of the Lamb of God in these words:

There is a fountain fill'd with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plung'd beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoic'd to see
That fountain in his day;
And there have I, as vile as he,
Wash'd all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransom'd church of God
Be sav'd to sin no more.

E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler sweeter song
I'll sing thy power to save,
When this poor lisping stamm'ring tongue
Lies silent in the grave.

The song of heaven is upon this same subject. The Holy Ghost has taught us the very words of their divine hymn, and what is the harmony of all the redeemed round the throne with one heart and one voice, blessing God and the Lamb: O that he may tune our hearts to join the chorus, and fit us now to sing in as high a strain as we can, and every day to aim higher, till we come to the completion of the heavenly vision thus described by the apostle:—

'After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, whom no one could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands: these are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and shall wipe away all tears from their eyes? and they sung with a loud voice, saying—'Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever.'—Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAP V.

The believer's triumph over sin in its guilt.

THE forgiveness of sins is the grand doctrine of salvation, on which peace with God is built. Sin is present with the be-

liever, but pardoned. Sin is felt, but ceases to condemn. This is the chief difficulty in experience. How the truth of God, and his holiness, and his threatenings, and the honour of his law can be maintained, and yet he can be faithful and just to forgive us our sins. The believer may be often shaken in his mind, and troubled with legal fears and workings, if he be not so well established by the Spirit, and word of God, as to submit in his conscience to God's way of pardoning sin: it was always one and the same, contrived and appointed in the everlasting councils of the blessed Trinity, and revealed upon the entrance of sin, *viz.* that a person in Jehovah would become incarnate, and take away sin by the sacrifice of himself. To him Moses and all the prophets give witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. The proclamation of grace holds it out most clearly. When Moses was permitted to see his glory, the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth: keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.' Every sacrifice preached this same truth visibly, shewing the death which the sinner deserved, and the divine method of pardoning it, through faith, in the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world: for Jesus is the very paschal Lamb who was sacrificed for us: and the deliverance which they experienced in Egypt, through the sprinkling of his blood, we feel the same in our hearts unto this day: through faith they kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them: through the same faith we keep the same feast, and, having found redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, we live safe out of the reach of the destroyer. We know our danger as they did, and we look to the Lamb of God for safety. It is the Holy Spirit who convinces both of sin and of pardon. His conviction of sin makes an impression upon the conscience of its infinite evil. He stops the sinner's mouth, and makes him subscribe to all that is said in Scripture of his guilt, and of his danger. Looking at himself under the law, and under sin, which is the transgression of the law, he is made to submit to the sentence of condemnation, and has nothing of his own to plead in arrest of judgment. Thus he is taught to think of the law, as God does, both of its precepts and penalties. He sees infinite justice, and holiness, and truth armed against him, and the desert of his sins to be everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, which

he has no power to resist, and no means to escape. When the Holy Spirit convinces him of righteousness, and manifests the grace of God, in the free forgiveness of his sins, yet still he feels the exceeding wickedness of them. He loathes and abhors himself as the subject of them, and groans, being burdened with the abiding sense of his corruptions. At his very best it is—'O wretched man, who shall deliver me,' &c. but at the same time he can rejoice in God his Saviour—'I thank God through Jesus Christ'—He is the propitiation for my sins, and I have found peace with God through faith in his blood. Thus the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus. He gives a steadfast faith in the atonement of Jesus and settles such a peace in the conscience, as answers all charges from sin and from unbelief. And hereby he fulfils the proclamation of grace in the New Testament, which agrees exactly with the sentiments of the Old. When our Lord sent out his apostles to preach the gospel to every creature, his commission to them runs in these words: 'And Jesus said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day: and that repentance, and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.' They were to warn sinners of their danger, and to call upon them to look to Jesus, and to him only for salvation. For he, who commandeth all men every where to repent, hath exalted Jesus to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto his people, and forgiveness of their sins. It is a gift of his royal grace. One of the high honours of his exaltation—that he can freely forgive every iniquity, and transgression, and sin, be they ever so many, or ever so great. For Jesus can take away all iniquity, and receive the sinner graciously. We, says Peter, are witnesses of these things: and so also is the Holy Ghost; whom God hath given to them that obey him—that come at his call in the gospel, and obey it: the Holy Ghost turning them from self to Christ, from sin to righteousness, from a life of sense to a life of faith, thereby witnesses their true conversion, which is a continual work of his grace in that repentance which is not to be repented of; and when he enables them to glorify God for this mercy he gives great joy and peace in believing the forgiveness of their sins; according to the commission which our Lord gave to St. Paul at his conversion; 'I send thee to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and *an inheritance* among them that are sanctified by faith that is

im me.' When this commission is opened to a sinner in his name, and credited by the power of his Spirit, then the conscience is purged from guilt, by that one offering, which perfecteth for ever. The believer in it has a clean heart given him. It is sanctified, and made a temple for the worship of the true God. To this the word witnesses—and the Holy Ghost is also a witness to him, that he may now enter with boldness into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus—every possible hinderance being removed, he may have access with confidence to the throne of grace—to a Father of mercies, loving him and blessing him with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. When he lives up to these privileges, then he feels as he ought to do. His faith relying steadfastly upon the divine promises, and giving full credit to a faithful God, he has a good conscience purged from dead works to serve the living God, and his heart consecrated for this service, he may sing of pardon and peace in as high a note of praise, and with as much spiritual joy, as ever any believer experienced. They had much in the Old Testament, when they sung the triumphs of the Lamb of God in the twentieth Psalm. The argument of which is thus given us in Bishop Horne's Comment, '1—4. The church prayeth for the prosperity of King Messiah, going forth to the battle as her champion and deliverer. For his acceptance by the Father, and for the accomplishment of his will:—5—7. She declareth her full assurance of faith, and her resolution to trust in him alone, and not in the arm of flesh:—8. She foreseeth the fall of her enemies, and her own exaltation: and 9. concludeth with a prayer to the God of her strength.' As long as the temple stood, and the service of God was regularly carried on in it, the true worshippers had every day a solemn commemoration of that sacrifice, which was to put away their sins. They were taught to look to that precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, whom God had set forth in every sacrifice to be the great propitiation and atonement? through which alone they were to expect pardon and peace. While the lamb was burning on the altar, every morning and evening, they celebrated his praises with the choicest instruments of music, and with the sweetest voices, making also melody in their hearts at the same time unto the Lord. Among other hymns given by inspiration of God for this joyful occasion, they used to sing the twentieth Psalm, in which they triumphed in the God of their salvation, and declared their faith and hope in him in full *concert, after this* manner—

'Jehovah will hear thee in the day of trouble, the name of the God of Jacob will defend thee: he will send thee help from his sanctuary, and he will strengthen thee out of Sion: he will grant thee according to thy heart, and he will fulfil all thy purposes: then he shall shout for joy in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we shall set up our banners, when Jehovah shall fulfil all thy requests. Now I have known Jehovah will help the Messiah, his Christ, and will answer him from his sanctuary with the mighty power of the right hand of Jesus. Some put their trust in chariots, and others in horses, but we will cause the name of Jehovah our Alehim (the Trinity in covenant) to be remembered; they are brought down and fallen, but we are risen, and made still to stand safe: for the King (Jesus) will put forth his power to save us; he will answer us in the day when we pray unto him.'

These are the words of the hymn: in which they express their faith in the future triumphs of the Lamb of God, and their hope in that one offering of his which was to perfect them for ever. The Divine appointment, the Divine acceptance, the Divine application of his sacrifice, is the most noble subject that could be sung upon earth: indeed, it is the subject of heaven, and will be the harmony and concert of eternity. May the Holy Ghost put our hearts in tune to join in it, and to adore and to bless the Lamb that was slain, setting up our banners as they did, Rom. viii. 31—34. conquerors over sin and Satan and all their enemies. We have the same Jesus to rejoice in, and as good reason as ever believers had, to rejoice in him with a fulness of joy. When the heart feels as happy as it can be here in God the Saviour, these are some of the delightful exercises of faith in his blood—

O, what am I, that such a sinner as I am should be thus highly favoured! A child of wrath, by nature, even as others, and by practice—having sinned long with greediness—against light and conviction—sinning and sorrowing—sorrowing and sinning from year to year—a slave to the lust of the flesh, to the lust of the eyes, and to the pride of life, every moment fit and ripe for hell. O what a monument of infinite patience and long-suffering—spared from day to day, and at last called to the saving knowledge of Jesus. O what exceeding riches of grace are these—that the Father would choose me in the Beloved, and give him to save me from sin and misery: that he would send his Spirit to quicken me, and to enable me to *believe*, that there was mercy in Jesus for me, even for me, *and plenteous* redemption. What sinner can be more indebted

than I am, for such miracles of grace? Glory be to God in the highest. My Lord Jesus, the great God and my Saviour, gave himself for me, that he might redeem me from all iniquity, and might cleanse me from all sin: trusting to his atonement, and to his righteousness, I am led to admire the Father's full absolution; 'Thy sins and thine iniquities I will remember no more.'

Thanks be to him for this unspeakable gift. He has pronounced them blessed, and he has caused me to feel some of their blessedness, whose iniquities he has forgiven, and whose sin he has covered: and therefore I look forward with thankfulness to the great day of redemption, when Jesus will present me to himself holy and without blemish as if I had never sinned. In this hope of salvation I triumph before God. Now I see the felicity of thy chosen—I rejoice in the gladness of thy people—and I glory with thine inheritance. Unto him who chose me in his Son—unto him, who loved me and washed me from my sins in his own blood—unto him, who gave me this faith, and keeps me in it: for this fellowship with the eternal Three, be eternal praise. Amen.

CHAP. VI.

The believer's victory over the dominion of sin.

We have heard from Scripture some of the victories of faith over sin in its pollution and in its guilt: but there is still a hard warfare to be maintained against its dominion; for it reigneth absolutely in the children of disobedience, and it never ceaseth to strive for mastery in the children of God; who have an evil nature still—an old man, who is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and who is to be put off every day—denied in his desires—mortified in his affections, and crucified in his appetites. Thus the commandment runs, 'Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.' And the new man, who is called to this warfare is ordered to make use of Christ's fulness for promised courage, and strength, and victory: for without Christ he can do nothing. Sin is himself—he is a body of sin; and he has not only to fight against himself, but also against principalities, and powers, hosts of foes, united under the banner of the god of this world, trying all their cunning, and all their force to bring the believer back into the bondage of corruption: and what he has of his own is on

their side. His worst foe is his indwelling sin, which has a complete body with all its members and lusts, always enticing to something unlawful, and tempting to the commission of it. Every faculty is ready to become an instrument of unrighteousness unto sin. It is an absolute tyrant, who rules his slaves with the most cruel rigour, keeping them captive to his will, although nothing but destruction and misery be in their ways.

Thus original sin is described in the ninth article of our church—It is the fault and corruption of every man born of Adam: and, notwithstanding it still remaineth in the regenerate, yet there is a promise of daily and of complete victory over the tyrant. Thus it is written, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace.' Once sin had full dominion, but it is taken away by the Spirit of Christ: not entirely destroyed, as to its being, but as to its ruling power—Dethroned in the judgment, there seen as it is, exceedingly sinful, exceeding dangerous—Dethroned in the conscience; the believer no longer under the law, but under grace, is freed from condemnation—Dethroned in the will: Not my will, Lord, but thine be done—Dethroned in the heart: I hate all evil thoughts, but thy law do I love: O what love have I unto thy law—Dethroned in the life, crucified with its affections and lusts, by the power of the cross of Jesus. It is not quite dead, but it is put to a lingering death, kept upon the cross, dying daily. And thus the sin, which is pardoned through the blood of Christ, is conquered by the arm of Christ, as it is written, 'He will subdue our iniquities,' and faith in his promised help keeps them under, subdues them effectually, so that they do not reign in the mortal body to obey them in the lusts thereof. Take an instance of this triumphant faith. Whatever the natural man can set his heart upon, or seek his happiness in—the lusts of the eyes, or the pride of life—Moses was enabled by the Spirit of Christ to overcome: 'By with Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.' What but almighty grace could have given him such a complete victory? He gained entire dominion over sin, even when it came to tempt him with all the pleasures, and riches, and honours of the world. He was *made strong* in faith: Christ ruling in his heart brought every

high thought into subjection to himself: so that Moses not only resigned all his temporal advantages for Christ's sake, but what natural men account a great paradox—he chose reproach, poverty, misery, rather than give up his interest in Christ. This is the victory which still overcometh the world, even our faith: for the New Testament furnishes us with such another instance of Christian heroism in the apostle of the Gentiles. He is giving an account of his own experience, and by what means he was now no longer under the law, but under grace a sinner saved from the sentence of the broken law, and from all hope of being made righteous by his own personal keeping of it—'I through the law (says he) am dead to the law, that I might live unto God,' &c. Once he was alive without the law, when he thought proudly of his own good life, that concerning the law he was blameless; but when the commandment came in the power of the Spirit, then it slew him, and killed all his former legal hopes. What he had trusted in before for life, he now found to be unto death. And Christ, faith in Christ, was the only means by which he saw he could live unto God, by his grace and to his glory. By this faith he then experienced the power of the crucified and risen Jesus: I am in Christ, says he, crucified with him, truly and spiritually dead to sin, to self, to the world, by the virtue of his cross: nevertheless by the same faith in the same Jesus I live, the Spirit of life in him has quickened my spirit: he has given me a new birth into the spiritual world, and has brought me to live upon the fulness of Jesus, as really now by faith, as I hope to live upon him by sense in heaven: 'Yet not I;' I neither had it of myself, nor do I continue it by any act of my own, 'but Christ liveth in me:' and although I seem to live outwardly like other men, yet 'the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God,' depending upon him every moment for fresh supplies of his Spirit, to keep me in union and communion with the Father and the Son, and thereby he gives me to feel in the heart some of the blessings of that love of God in Christ which surpasseth knowledge. It is this that purifies my soul, and sanctifies my life: blessed, for ever blessed be his name, who thus loved me, and gave himself for me.

Such were the heroes of Christianity. They fought the Lord's battles, and in the power of his might they subdued sin: they obtained dominion over it through faith in Jesus. And the same faith in the same Jesus is still mighty through him to obtain as great victories. The truth of his promise,

the faithfulness of the Promiser, the strength of his arm to fulfil his promise: these did not fail Moses nor Paul—never did—never can fail any believer. Thus speaketh the Lord unto them—'Sin shall not have dominion over you'—having pardoned it by my blood. I will subdue it by my Spirit: trust me, you shall find strong faith an overmatch for strong sin: because it fights in the strength of Jesus, to whom all things are possible, and who must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. And sin and death shall be no more. Say, it is a besetting sin, this only gives more employment for faith and for the power of Jesus. It may be a sin of constitution, breaking out into wrath and passion, that the man has no government of himself: but the Spirit of Christ can make him a new creature, and can enable him to put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. It may be a long habit of sin: but is any thing too hard for the Lord? Has he not promised—'A new heart will I give you, and I will put my Spirit within you, and I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my commandments and practise them.' Wherever grace reigns this scripture is fulfilled. The armies of the Lord of hosts fight under his banner, and no weapon formed against them can prosper—Kept by his mighty power they are daily more than conquerors, marching on triumphant over all opposition: for he enables them to hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of hope firm unto the end. Thus they were commanded to pray—'Order my steps, O Lord, according to thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.' They looked to his word, and to his arm for the right ordering of their steps, believing that he would keep the feet of his saints, and sin should not have dominion over them, now they were no longer under the law, but under the kingdom of his grace. The victory which he had promised, they expected, and he did put forth his power, according to that good word wherein he had caused them to place their trust, they found his grace sufficient to subdue the tyranny of iniquity; yea, where sin had abounded, grace did much more abound in daily victory over its wiles and assaults. And the power of Christ resting upon them they were kept in this spirit of prayer.

O thou God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen me mightily by thy Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in my heart by faith, and I may have his strength to set against the power of my sins, and mine enemies. For ordeas,

for courage, for perseverance, for victory, for eternal triumph, I look unto thee for all. Blessed be thy name, that thou hast chosen me to be a soldier, and to fight under the banner of Jesus, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously. He made all mine enemies his own, and they are now under his feet: and I believe according to thy good word, that thou wilt put them under mine. Thou hast conquered them for me, and hast engaged to conquer them in me, and by me. It is of thy mere grace, almighty Jesus, that I am enabled to deny myself, to take up my cross, and to follow thee in this holy war. All my sufficiency is from the fresh supplies of thy Spirit. O grant me them abundantly to the increase of my faith, and to the praise of thy promised help. Cause me to depend every moment upon it; let me experience, that when I am weakest in myself, I may be made strongest in the Lord. And when I have nothing left me to glory in of mine own, then my soul may magnify the Lord, and my Spirit may rejoice in God my Saviour. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid, because the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song: he also is become my salvation. To his grace and power be all the glory for ever and ever. Amen and Amen.

CHAP. VII.

The believer's triumph over his troubles.

After sin is pardoned, and the pardoned sinner is enabled to fight the good fight of faith against it, yet there is another enemy assaulting him to the last moment of his life. Fallen man is born to trouble. The man in Christ is so far from being exempt, that many are the troubles of the righteous. He is, in common with others, liable to pain and poverty, and to afflictions of every kind; he is by his very profession exposed to some of the most trying nature—his owning Christ—his following Christ—his conformity to Christ—give offence, provoke the malice of wicked men, and the rage of wicked spirits; wave does not follow wave more certainly, than every day brings its fresh troubles, and forces the believer to seek for aids and comforts out of himself. This is a sore fight of afflictions. To bear up under them with any patience, and to reap profit from them is a task above the power of mere man. Every little pain stirs up murmuring and impatience, and this rebellion against God's will is the parent of a thousand fretful

tempers: and these exercised by sharp suffering render the man truly miserable. If his suffering continue long, increases much, it often drives the poor sinner to despair: and if he has no Saviour to flee unto, he is sometimes guilty of self-murder, and dies in an act of sin, rushing headlong into everlasting destruction—the wisdom of men, of Cato himself, furnishing no better remedy against the numerous evils of human life.

To man thus exposed to suffering, and helpless under it, his suffering remaining as long as sin remains, how necessary must be the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ! he has vouchsafed to give us his promises of help, suited to every possible case of distress. When it his will, that any of his people should be tried, he engages to make the trial of their faith much more precious than that of gold, which perisheth. He is with them, present with his divine supports and holy comforts. 'Call upon me (says he) in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me: many are the troubles of the righteous, but out of them all the Lord delivereth them.' They acknowledge it with gratitude; 'God was our refuge and strength, we have found him a very present help in trouble,' helping us to bear up under the heaviest pressures, keeping his everlasting arms underneath us, as long as we suffer; and if the sufferings increase, increasing our faith and patience, until they have done their perfect work.

When through the aids of his Spirit these promises have their full credit, through his inward peace, which he alone can give, and which the world cannot take away: when he makes the heart to feel happy in God, enjoying the peculiar supports of the gospel, and living up to its privileges, then the believer finds the apostle's experience to be true—'always sorrowful, yet always rejoicing,' and sometimes with a fulness of joy, according to what is written, 'but now, thus saith the Lord, that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, *fear not*, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by my name, thou art mine: when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee: for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel thy Saviour: *fear not*, for I am with thee,' to support, to deliver. This is spoken to the redeemed, who are God's property, and whom he bought with a great price. What could the Lord God *engage to do* for them more, than is here promised, in order to *still all* their guilty fears, and to quiet all their natural fears.

Trusting to the redemption that is in the blood of the Lamb, they are under his keeping, they go out in his strength to meet their trials and their enemies. Jesus is with them, on their side; and therefore believing in him they need not fear any suffering. Jehovah is their Alehim, their covenant God in Trinity, their sworn allies, engaged by his almighty arm to save them from all evil, and to give them all possible good. 'I the Lord (says he) do keep thee—I will water thee with the dew of heaven every moment—lest any hurt thee, I will keep thee night and day.' Having such great and exceeding precious promises, with what holy courage should the believer look up to a faithful God, and what strong consolation should they afford him, when he is to go through the fire or through the water. He may sing with Jonah, 'I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving—salvation is of the Lord.' Or with the triumphant faith of the three children, who were not afraid to go into the furnace, heated seven times hotter than usual, fully persuaded, that whether they lived or died, Jesus would be with them. Threatened with the burning fiery furnace, if they refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar's image, 'They said, O king, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter: if it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king.' And he did, he went with them into the fire, and they walked in the midst of the flames unhurt. The same Jesus is daily repeating the same miracle. He has approved himself in all ages to be the friend of his afflicted people: whatever he sends to them, he sends it with his blessing. So they testify—'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.' They know it by his promise, and they felt it by experience: it is good for us that we have been in trouble: we have gone through many seas and storms of affliction, and through the raging fire of persecution, not only unhurt, but benefited: for Christ was with us. As the suffering of Christ abounded, so our consolation abounded by Christ: he feels for them, as his members, and has bowels of the tenderest compassion. In all their affliction he is afflicted. He brings in his supports, and comes with his deliverance in the best time. He leaves no accusation of sin in the conscience, but gives and maintains a sweet peace with God. O what matter of triumph is it, when this peace rules in the heart, always and by all means testifying—'Since God is for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with

him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' Thanks without ceasing be to Jesus, the Lamb that was slain for this complete and eternal victory over sin: the apostle carries on his praises, Rom. viii. that through Jesus all outward opposition shall fall before us —'Who shall separate us from Christ's love to us; shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter: nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that hath loved us.' His love is in them all—appoints them, sends them, proportions them, and they conquer them all in his strength, not only conquer, but are more than conquerors: they are great gainers: they gain what is better than all the world, fresh proof of his love, they gain experience of it: for they find that nothing can hurt them, now he has taken them under his protection. For this his divine support we are taught to pray daily, asking it as a matter of mere favour, and expecting it only through the grace and intercession of our great High-priest.

'We humbly beseech thee, O Father, mercifully to look upon our infirmities, and for the glory of thy name turn from us all those evils which we most righteously have deserved, and grant that in all our troubles we may put our whole trust and confidence in thy mercy, and evermore serve thee in holiness, and pureness of living, to thy honour and glory, through our only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'

When this is the prayer of faith, outward trials become inward mercies: for the Holy Spirit keeps the heart settled with its whole trust and confidence upon his promised help: so that if the trials increase, he makes them redound to the glory of God. If the outward man be a greater sufferer, even ready to perish, he renews the inward man day by day: he brings in abundant grace to sanctify abundant sufferings: whereby he satisfies the hearts of the sufferers, that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, will work for them a far more excellent and eternal weight of glory. The hope of this keeps them patient and thankful. By the power of the *Holy Ghost*, they know this eternal triumph will be soon. Yet a very, very little while, they will be favoured with the sight

of the King in his beauty. They shall sit down with him in his throne, and shall reign with him for ever and ever.

For the farther confirmation of our faith, he has set before us a cloud of witnesses, who testify with one voice, that he sanctified all their troubles, and turned them into covenant blessings. So one of them said—'I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth; my soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof and be glad: O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together; I sought the Lord, and he heard, and delivered me from all my fears. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.' Their very troubles become matter of triumph. He shut them up in the ark, and they were saved, when he drowned the world of the ungodly. Peter, speaking from experience, says, 'the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of their trouble, as he did righteous Lot, when he overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.' The more the Egyptians oppressed his people, the more they multiplied and grew. Behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. The fire of persecution raged against the church, but the blood of the martyrs was fruitful, and increased it both in number and in grace. The seed of the wicked have been at enmity with the children of the promise from the beginning, but these trusted in the Captain of their salvation, and he led them on conquering and to conquer: 'Through faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens; women received their dead raised to life again, and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection:—these and the other worthies mentioned (Hebrews, chap. xi.) did wonders through Christ, who strengthened them: they loved not their lives unto death, fully persuaded, that when he should call them to it, he would be with them, and would enable them to finish their course with joy. And he did: for they all obtained a good report through faith, leaving us an example to follow the steps of their faith, and encouraging us to do it with holy boldness, whatever troubles we meet with in our way. We may, we ought to rejoice in tribulation: for we have the same Jesus to look unto, the author and the finisher of their faith and ours, the same promises of his support, the same almighty arm to make them good, and the same

matter of triumph, which they experienced, whom he led on from strength to strength, until every one of them in Sion appeared before God. This is the certain heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness and salvation are of me, saith the Lord.

Of the same sentiments were our reformers, which they give us in these remarkable words in one of their prayers: 'O God, who art the author of peace, and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom: defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies, that we surely trusting in defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries, through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.'

And to the same purpose in one of their homilies they thus express themselves: 'All correction which God sendeth us in this present time, seemeth to have no joy and comfort, but sorrow and pain; yet it bringeth with it a taste of God's mercy and goodness towards them that be so corrected, and a sure hope of God's everlasting consolation in heaven. If then these sorrows, diseases, and sicknesses, and also death itself, be nothing else but our heavenly Father's rod, whereby he certifieth us of his love and gracious favour, whereby he trieth and purifieth us, whereby he giveth unto us holiness, and certifieth us that we be his children, and he our merciful Father; shall we not then with all humility, as obedient and loving children, joyfully kiss our heavenly Father's rod, and ever say in our hearts with our Saviour Jesus Christ—Father, if this anguish and sorrow which I feel, and death which I see approach, may not pass, but that thy will is that I must suffer them, *thy will be done*.'

O thou hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble, I acknowledge my reluctance to take up thy cross, and my weakness in bearing it, hold thou me up by fresh supplies of thy Spirit, that I may be safe. Let thy strength be perfected in my weakness. Thy promises of help are exceeding great: through thee I do believe the truth of them, and I pray for grace to make a right use of them. Enable me in patience to possess my soul, that when it is thy will to try my faith, I may live up to my privileges, and may find it better to suffer with Christ than to reign with the world. O Lord, thou hast shewed this favour to Moses, and thou hast done more than this—Thou hast made thy witnesses glorify thee in the fires —*they* have marched on fighting thy battles against hosts of foes, and they did not account their lives dear to themselves,

so they might finish their course with joy, and die in faith, blessing and praising thy holy name. O thou faithful God, thou art the same to us now, as thou wast to them. Lead me on then in thy strength, trusting in thy word, and leaning on thine arm. Thou hast promised thy flock, and I hope I am one of them—'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.' O thou good Shepherd, let me trust in thy love, and feel thy supports, that whatever lies before me to be done or suffered, I may be enabled to do it, and to suffer it by the continual supplies of thy Spirit. And by his influence help me to persevere, till I win the prize of my high calling, and be admitted to join that great company, whom no one can number, who stand before the throne of God and the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands: these are they who come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them: they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun smite them, nor any heat: for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. O my Jesus, I bless thee for this most glorious prospect; it is of thy mere grace that I am in any measure enabled to join that great company: it is entirely of thy special favour that I have any good hope to come to their glory: for this, and for all thy mercies, to thee with the Father, and the eternal Spirit, the three in one Jehovah, I give honour, and glory, and thanks, to-day, and I hope to do it without ceasing for ever and ever. Amen and Amen.

CHAP VIII.

The believer's triumph over the infirmities of old age.

It is appointed unto all men once to die. The time is fixed by an immutable decree. The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow: for it is soon cut off, and we flee away. If some be permitted to live longer, yet the infirmities of old age must arrive, bringing with

them labour and sorrow, the forerunners of death. Circulation will become languid. The senses of the body will grow dull and heavy. The faculties of the mind will be impaired, and will discover it by not remembering proper names. In this decline of life believers are subject to the same infirmities with other men: they have no exemption from pain, or sickness, or death: but they have that which keeps up their spirits, and makes them patient and joyful. The consolations of God are then most needed, and he has promised them, and he is faithful: he never failed them, who trusted in him. He has suited his promises to all the infirmities of age. He knows our frame perfectly, and has described it with an unerring pen, (Ecclesiastes, chap. xii.) that when we feel the signs of old age, we may apply to him for grace to profit by them. The symptoms there given are infallibly true and just, and are as so many monitors, warning the man, that the vigour of life is declining, and that the body is returning to the earth from whence it came. Happy is he who takes this warning, and remembers his Creator in the days of his youth, before the wearisome days come, of weakness and pain. He has fled to Jesus for refuge —and finds and experiences what he has engaged to do for his people, when heart and flesh begin to fail them. Blessed be his grace for the abundant provision which he has made for their faith and patience: he says to them, 'I will be with you, I will never leave you nor forsake you: so that you may boldly say, The Lord is our helper, and we need not fear what the infirmities of age can do unto us.' One of them, the Christian hero, thus encouraged himself in the Lord his God —'Thou art my hope, O Lord God, thou art my trust even from my youth: by thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee—I am a wonder unto many, but thou art my strong refuge.' This was his trust: and God did not forsake him. He remembered his word unto his servant, wherein he had caused him to depend. There failed not aught of any good thing, which the Lord had spoken unto him. O what great encouragement have believers to follow the steps of this faith! for his God is their God, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, to young and old, who put their trust in him. His promise to the Israel of God cannot be broken. Thus he pledges his word of truth to them, giving them a warrant to pray unto him: 'my mouth shall be filled *with* thy praise, and with thy honour, all the day long: for *thou* wilt not cast me off in the time of old age, thou wilt not

forsake me, when my strength faileth.' To this prayer the Lord inclined his ear, and vouchsafed this gracious answer, 'Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb, and even to your old age, I am he, and even to hoary hairs I will carry you, I have made and I will bear you, even I will carry and I will deliver you.' These are some of his rich cordials for the aged: he provided them in his love, and he is sensibly touched with the feelings of their infirmities in administering them: for he himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses. His compassions bind him to comfort and relieve his old disciples: and when they apply to him in time of need, he is ever present to grant them his promised help: yea, so suited to their case, as to make them grow in grace, as they grow in years. They bring forth fruit in their old age, the rich fruit of humility, and the ripe fruit of thankfulness; fruit that endureth unto everlasting life. We have a happy instance of this in God's goodness to an ancient believer, who lived to be a hundred and seventy-five years old. He was the friend of God, who had blessed Abraham through life, and that in all things, and who even to hoary hairs loaded him with blessings. For God had promised him, 'Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace, thou shalt be buried in a good old age;' and the sacred historian, relating the fulfilling of the promise, says, 'he gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered to his people.' His old age was good, in body and soul. Whatever infirmities he had, they were intended for good, and actually did him good. He was a very cheerful pleasant old man. The peace of his mind had a sweet influence on his temper and behaviour. It kept him from being fretful and peevish in his family. He was loving to his children, and kind to his servants: God himself being witness. He was also happy in his last years; for he spent them in faith, and when they came to an end, he died in peace: with his last breath he committed his spirit into the hands of him who had redeemed it, *full of years:* it is in the original one word—he was satisfied: so it is rendered, Ps. xvii. 15. 'As for me I shall behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake up after thy likeness:' he was satisfied with what he had enjoyed of the favour and friendship of his God: who had been his shield to defend him from all sins and enemies, and also had promised to be his exceeding great reward: this he obtained, when he was gathered to his people.

to the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to the most blissful communion of the three in Jehovah. All the children of faithful Abraham, treading in the steps of his faith, have the same God to deal with, who keepeth promise for ever. It is recorded of Isaac, the heir of the same promise with his father, that he died in the same faith, an old man. He was tried with many infirmities, but we read of no complaints, though he was a hundred and eighty years of age. He expired in praise and thankfulness, satisfied with life, and happy in the prospect beyond death. And his son Jacob, a hundred and forty-seven years old, when he was dying, declared that he had waited for the salvation of God: waiting faith is strong faith: and after he had blessed his children, and had given commandment concerning his bones, he quietly, as if he had been going to sleep, gathered up his feet into the bed, and died in peace, an old man, and satisfied. All these lived in the world, strangers and pilgrims, looking for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God: and they were not disappointed of their hope, they all died in faith —in an act of faith, and were gathered to their people, to the general assembly and church of the first-born. When they came to the end of their faith, they came to heaven. The moment they expired, they entered the city, which God had prepared for them: and their bodies, sleeping in the dust, are in the covenant of life, and shall be raised and glorified in the morning of the resurrection: for our Lord proves that the dead shall rise from this very circumstance: he says to the Jews—'Have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: he is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living.' In this faith the patriarchs died: being children of the resurrection, they left their bodies in the hand and care of a covenant God, well assured that he would raise them up to glory and life everlasting, according to that good word wherein he had caused them to put their trust.

These examples of the loving-kindness of God to his aged servants were recorded for our learning; that believers, if God by his providence should bring them to old age, might be encouraged to trust in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with such a confidence of their hearts, as not to doubt of the divine truth, or of the divine power. Whatever he was *to them,* he is the same to us—Our God as well as theirs—*Our covenant* God engaged to glorify both body and soul: on

whom we are commanded to cast all our cares and concerns in extreme old age. If what is of nature be failing, what is of grace cannot. If the life of sense be dying, the life of faith should flourish the more. It is a life that cannot die; for the branches thrive and bring forth fruit in their old age, not of themselves, but because they are ingrafted into the heavenly Vine, in which they live for ever. 'I am the vine (says Jesus,) ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.' But through my Spirit strengthening you, he will make you bud and flourish, and fill the face of the world with fruit. He will so fill you with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Christ Jesus, to the glory and praise of God, that your last days shall be your best days.

In this view of old age, it may become a favourable time for exercising and improving faith; because the activity of the life of sense is abating, and thereby many things are removed, which before obstructed the growth of the spiritual life. Now is the time to learn to walk by faith, and not by sense. A believer young in years, and young in experience, is often tempted to judge of himself by his feelings, more than by the word of God. In a good frame he is a good believer. Then all is well with him. But when he is walking in darkness, he is very apt to question his state—If all be right with me, why am I thus?—my present frame is very dull and uncomfortable—I am not so lively as I used to be in prayer, or in ordinances—my delight in God, and the things of God, is far short of what it was formerly—perhaps I have been deceiving myself, and crying, Peace, peace, when there was no peace for me.

From this temptation age itself is a sort of deliverance; self-activity is weakened, and thereby, through grace, self-dependance. The believer, if he be a good scholar, will now learn to walk more by faith, and less by sight. The vigour of his senses is decaying. The high spirits of youth are abating. His present lesson is very plain and simple, and while he attends to what is passing in him, and about him, he has a thousand monitors, calling upon him now to learn and practice a perfect dependance on those things which are always one and the same, without any variableness, or the least shadow of turning. One record of God. One Saviour. One Spirit. One faith, of which the Saviour is the author and the finisher. This faith is made to grow and flourish, as there is less dependance on other things; and as age itself

tends to weaken this dependance, it becomes, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, a favourable time to live less upon the things which are seen, and more upon the things that are not seen. Less of sense, more of faith. One scale rises as the other falls, the outward man dying, the inward man grows more lively—yea, grows up into Christ Jesus, and that in all things. O blessed old man—thou hast lived to a good time, when this is thy experience: when in the prayer of faith thou canst cast all thy burdens on thy Saviour; 'Lord, keep me, a poor helpless creature—Now I feel that of myself I can do nothing as I ought, or as I wish to do—glorify thy grace in me, and strengthen me mightily by thy Spirit in the inner man, that I may bless thee for thy salvation, and for the things which accompany salvation—into thy faithful hands, for life and death, I commit myself, and all my concerns; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.'

But it must be remembered, that old age does not produce these happy effects of itself. It is not of nature, but entirely of grace, that any one is able to gain such spiritual profit from bodily infirmities. The mere natural man, fortify him with all his boasted aids of reason and philosophy, yet he cannot help murmuring, when age brings weakness, and sickness brings pains. He becomes peevish and fretful. Having no friendship with God, he cannot look up for divine supports, when all human begin to fail him. Under a severe fit of the stone, or a long fit of the gout, he is often out of all patience. Uneasy in himself, he is out of humour with every body and every thing. How different is the believer in the same circumstances! His body feels pain as others do: but his mind is comfortable, and at ease. Happy in God, he has patience given him to bear his sufferings, and grace to profit from them; yea, the peace of God rules in his heart always, and by all means.

An old man with this peace, which surpasseth all understanding, ruling in his heart, will be so far from complaining, that he has every thing to be thankful for, which can render him blessed of the Lord. He is provided with an infallible antidote against all that old age can try him with.—It is true, I have an infirm body, but, thank God, I have a sound mind: age has brought upon me great weakness, but this makes more room for the power of God, that it may be perfected in my weakness. I have many pains, but not so many as he has comforts to give me: in the worst of them he keeps me patient, —Father, thy will be done. I have an afflicted body, but I

have a happy heart: although the outward man be perishing, yet I faint not, because the inward is renewed day by day—My supports are great, the consolations of God not a few—I feel the symptoms of old age warning me daily of my approaching dissolution, through grace I take the warning—they find me living, and I hope they will find me dying, in the faith of the Son of God. The earthly tabernacle is taking down; but he does it with much tenderness and love, and assures me, that he has prepared for me a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. May he who keeps it for me, and me for it, never leave me nor forsake me, till I be with him, where he is, and be like him, and enjoy him for ever and ever. Yet a very, very little while—hold on faith and patience, and I shall see Jesus in his glory, which is the heaven of heavens.

O thou merciful and faithful high-priest, Jesus Christ, I bless thee for thy kind promises to the aged. Thou hast suited them in great mercy to all their infirmities, and thou art always with them to help in time of need. I begin to feel the sad effects of sin in my body, weakening it, and tending to bring it down to its appointed end. To thee I look, almighty Jesus, for thy promised grace. O grant me constant supplies of thy Spirit, that I may profit by my infirmities, may exercise and improve my faith in thee, that they may keep me humble, and I may pray more in faith; and keep me thankful, that I may be more in praise. Thine arm is not shortened, nor can thy compassions fail. Stand by me then, and hold me up according to thy word. Make me strong in thy strength, that I may daily put more honour upon thy love and thy power. In the decline of life, let me not doubt of thy faithfulness to support, and when thou seest it best to comfort me. Vouchsafe me the consolations of God; when my heart and my flesh fail me, then be thou the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. When I am weakest in myself, then make me strongest in the Lord: and if it be thy holy will, that I should become quite helpless, an infant again, make me to lie quiet in thy hand, without murmuring or repining, but believing that thou art all my salvation, and enjoying in thee all my desire. Grant me this, Lord Jesus: for thy mercies' sake, let me die in faith. Amen and Amen.

CHAP. IX.

The believer's triumph over death.

Man consists of two parts, a body and a soul. The bodily life is dependant on the light and air of this world, and on that

circulation, which they maintain and carry on. When this connexion is broken, the body expires, it loses all sense and motion, and is dead. So the life of the soul is dependant on the light and air of the spiritual world. Jehovah in trinity is the Creator, the only fountain of being, and there can be nothing independent of him: Christ is the light, and the Holy Spirit is the breath or air of all spiritual life, and when this connexion is broken, although the soul may exist, yet its happiness in God is broken, and at an end. Sin, that great murderer sin, brought death upon body and soul: 'For as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:' and we read, the soul that sinneth it shall die, sin separating it from its communion with the Father of spirits. In the moment that Adam sinned, the spiritual death took place: for he had lost the Spirit of life, and was dead in trespasses and sins: and that same moment his body became mortal, although he lived nine hundred years after. Thus we have sin, and death, and misery, entailed upon all his descendants, from the first Adam, who is of the earth, earthy. O how precious to a sinner in these circumstances should be the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, who stands at the head of the spiritual world, that he may give his righteousness, and his life, and his happiness to all that believe in him! He comes Jehovah of hosts in our nature, as our champion to fight our battles, and to conquer all our foes. Immanuel was made sin for us, and he died for our sins according to the Scriptures, when the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all, and was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. We read therein of his noble challenge to death and the grave: 'I will ransom my people from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death—O death, I will be thy plagues—O grave, I will be thy destruction, repentance shall be hid from mine eyes. It was the Captain of our salvation, the Lord of hosts is his name, who purposed this in the everlasting councils, and in due time fulfilled it by his almighty power. 'Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and might deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' O what infinite condescension is this! what love, surpassing all knowledge! The most high God is manifest in the flesh, that as God in our nature, he might be our surety to act and suffer for us men, and

for our salvation. Accordingly he takes our sins upon himself, bears the guilt and punishment of them in his own body and soul upon the tree, gives his own life a ransom for ours, that by his death he might live. He was buried, but he rose again the third day, having loosed the bonds of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. In this conflict with death and the grave, repentance was hid from his eyes. He knew what he was to go through, more than any of us can conceive of pain and agony, yet he would not change his purpose of grace, although he was to become obedient unto death, the most tormenting, the most shameful, even the death of the cross. His enemies having brought him to the grave, and sealed the sepulchre, seemed then to have him in their power. So they thought: but here Jesus made his complete and eternal triumph. By his resurrection he swallowed up death in victory: for he did not rise as a private person, but as the first-fruits of the dead, drawing the joyful harvest after him: the Lord is risen indeed, the Head of the body the church, and has the power of an endless life to quicken all his members. In which most glorious prospect, the apostle, quoting the passage above mentioned, breaks out into these raptures of joy, seeing all his enemies vanquished, and nothing but bliss and glory before him—'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.' The law armed death with its sting, as the just wages of the transgression of the law: but Jesus our surety magnified the law, by his holy life, in all its precepts, and by his death in all its penalties. He died for our sins, and by his rising from the dead, he demonstrated that he had taken out its sting, and had disarmed it of its power to hurt: nay, had done much more—he had changed death unto life. 'I am the resurrection and the life (saith the Lord;) he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.' By faith in him we share in the triumph and glory of his resurrection, and have a new song put into our mouths, with which we may make the sweetest melody in our hearts, even when our breath is failing us: 'Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

These are Scripture views of the almighty Jesus. Out of his infinite compassion he undertook to save his people from sin and death, the works of the devil; and he has done it. It is finished. He has put away sin by his sacrifice, and he

completed his conquest of death by his resurrection; and has had witnesses of these gospel truths in all ages, whom he sent to preach repentance, and remission of sins, in his name. When it is the good pleasure of his own will to accompany the message with power from on high, then he blesses it by making it the ministration of righteousness and of life: as it is written, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth in him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life,' already. The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath freed the believer from the law of sin and of death, and has also created in him a new life: he has given him a new birth unto the spiritual world, and spiritual senses to fit him for spiritual enjoyments: for he is actually passed from death unto life. By the Holy Spirit as the agent, and by faith as the instrument, he is made a child of God, united to Christ, one with him, interested in him, and so closely joined to him, as the members are to the head, as to be a real partaker of all that he did upon earth, and of all that he is now doing for his redeemed in heaven. He has a good warrant, for he is not only permitted, but also commanded, to apply to himself *all* the privileges and blessings, which are contained in this large charter of grace. 'Ye are complete in Christ, who is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead: and you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us; and he took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross, and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in that same cross.' In this view of the almighty Conqueror of all our enemies, and of his enabling us also by faith to come after him, conquering and to conquer, what thanks and praises should be given unto him! there is no possible evil, but he has removed it from us—and no possible good, but he has obtained the right, and gives the possession. We are complete in him, our head—completely circumcised in heart by his circumcision, so as to put off the body of sin; and risen indeed with him by the faith of his own operation: through

which we have the first resurrection from the grave of sin, and shall have the resurrection of the body from the grave of death. He now gives the first as a sure earnest of the second. He raises us from the grave of sin, and quickens us to newness of life, and thereby gives us a lively hope, that we shall one day be with him and like him. In this hope the redeemed of the Lord have thus expressed their joys—'We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners,' in defiance of all our enemies—we need not fear sin, nor Satan, nor death, nor hell. Our Redeemer is strong, the Lord of hosts is his name. He for us men, and for our salvation, was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. And he has destroyed them. He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. His victory was complete, and in him we conquer. We come after him only to gather up the spoils of his triumph. Through faith in him the sting of death is taken out of the conscience, and thereby the fear of it out of the heart. A believer ought to say, and when he is in his right mind he does say, with joy and gratitude—'The Lord is my light and my salvation, what then shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom then shall I be afraid? Yea, though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear no evil—I need not fear any—because thou my Lord and Saviour hast promised to be with me; thy rod and thy staff, they shall comfort me.' What an infallible antidote has our Jesus here provided against all guilty fears, and against all natural fears? These promises to his dying followers cannot fail. He who made them is almighty to fulfil them; and almighty to enable us to believe, that he will both support and comfort. Jesus, wonderful in his person, wonderful in all his works and ways—he has changed the very nature of death; he has turned it into life. Whosoever believeth in him shall never die, but is passed already from death unto life. The Holy Spirit has put him into present possession of a life laid up with Christ, out of the reach of death: so that when his body expires, it falls asleep in the Lord, and his spirit enters upon an eternal triumph of life and glory, among the spirits of just men made perfect.

O what a deliverance is this from the bondage of sin, and errors of the grave! It is the peculiar blessedness of believers in Jesus: for the natural man cannot but fear death, and look upon it as his enemy. He has no prospects, but what are bounded by time. His whole happiness is in the present world, and in the enjoyment of what he calls the blessings of

it. He was laying fine plans, and hoping to live to execute them—heaping up riches—living in the unrestrained liberty of sensual enjoyments—murdering his time—misspending his talents—without any concern about eternal things—when, lo, an enemy comes, and puts an end to all his schemes. He dies. Perhaps he may be a sceptic, doubting of the certainty of a future state: he may wish there was none, but he can have no evidence; and if he continue to wish it, even to the last, O what a scene will open, when he meets a just and an angry God! He may be a materialist, and please himself with fancying, that what we call his soul, will vanish at his death into soft air: but the God of truth says, that when the dust shall return to the earth, as it was, the spirit shall return to God who gave it: and in the morning of the resurrection Christ will reanimate the dust, and body and soul shall be united to live for ever. He may be one of the careless, quite unprepared; but when the messenger arrests him, he must go with him, and that in a moment. Perhaps he may be a moralist, trusting to his own goodness: he may fortify himself with arguments taken from Seneca; but these will furnish him with no armour, proof against the guilt of sin, or the sting of death. He may seek aids from philosophy, falsely so called; but its votaries, professing themselves to be wise, in the hour of death found that they were fools. Every human help has failed, when most wanted. 'But blessed is he, who hath the God of Jacob for his help, and whose hope is in the Lord his God, who made heaven and earth, and all that therein is, who keepeth his promise for ever.' Here is the Christian's never-failing support. God, even his covenant God, has promised to be with him, and to be his Saviour in death. God Jesus, almighty to keep his promise for ever, is his one hope, living and dying: and he is his gain both in life and death. If he has won Christ, he has lived to a blessed time; and, whenever he dies, Christ will make death his friend, and will reconcile him to his going to the Lord, which is best of all. To look upon death as an enemy, to fear it as if it could take from us any thing worth keeping, or as if it did not put us into the eternal possession of every thing worth enjoying, these are views of the resurrection of Jesus very dishonourable to his victories, and very injurious to our interest in him. He undertook to conquer death for us, as our surety. He has done it. He has swallowed up death in victory. He has made it our friend and our benefactor; for he has engaged to support us *in our last* moments. He never did, he never can, fail any

who put their trust in him. Experience has confirmed his faithfulness in all ages. His soldiers, whom he made valiant in fight, a goodly company whom no one can number, have triumphed gloriously—before death—in death—and after death.

Before death he prepared them to meet it in faith: for the great design of his gospel is to arm them against the guilt of sin, and the terrors of death. And they are good soldiers of Christ Jesus who put on this armour—who have learnt their exercise, and who by their daily battles keep their arms shining and bright. Looking to Jesus, the Captain of their salvation, for orders, for courage, for strength, for victory, all opposition falls before them. He enables them to fight the good fight of faith, and the more they conquer sin, the less they have to fear from death: for Christ is to them the whole armour of God, and the pieces of this armour are the graces of his Spirit. For with these the apostle says, in Ephesians, chap. vi. that Christ has perfectly equipped the armies of the Lord. They have the truth of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the peace of God in Christ, faith in Christ, the word of Christ, hope in Christ, and prayer to Christ for fresh supplies of his Spirit, that he would enable them to make such a use of their armour, that they might get the victory over sin and death, and he might get all the praise. In this holy war, he is every thing to them, and they find in him, and receive out of his fulness, whatever they want for the peace of their conscience, and for the happiness of their hearts. Sin is pardoned. Death is conquered. They experience the power of his resurrection, and being passed from death unto life, they have believing views of their own dissolution. We read of their deliverance from the fear of death, and we have examples of those who were more afraid of sin than of death, yea, who chose to go into a burning fiery furnace, rather than offend their God: hear how they triumphed—'Our God is able to deliver us; but if he does not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.' Hear the witness of another Christian hero, how he was enabled to look upon death—'The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me: but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.' This was a great victory, but the case is not singular: in the same faith died the noble army of martyrs, of whom we read, 'that they overcame the accuser

of the brethren by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.' And to this day, the Holy Spirit witnesses to the same truth, and seals it upon the consciences of believers in the hour of death. I call one evidence, a great dignitary in our church, a man of great learning and never suspected of enthusiasm; being near his death he thus expressed himself—'I cannot plead innocency of life, especially of my youth: but I am to be judged by a merciful God, who is not willing to see what I have done amiss: and though of myself I have nothing to present to him, but sins and misery: yet I know he looks not upon me now as I am of myself, but as I am in my Saviour, and hath given me, even at this time, some testimonies by his Holy Spirit, that I am of the number of his elect: I am therefore full of joy, and shall die in peace.'

Thus the precious Jesus was in the prospect of death more desirable than life itself. So he was to them in dying. All these died in faith. They were his witnesses, that he kept every thing hurtful from them, and brought them in triumph to the end of their lives. That great company round his throne, who are crowned conquerors, testify for him that he *did* not leave them, nor forsake them, one moment. He kept his word with them. He smoothed their bed in their sickness. He was tender over them, and wiped away all tears from their eyes. When fainting, he gave them strong consolation. When he called them to meet death in all its terrors, to suffer in flames of fire, to be torn to pieces by wild beasts, to be tormented in every way that malice could invent, or the power of tyrants could inflict—he was with them—their Saviour and their God—the tender care of his heart, and the mighty power of his arm, were never more felt than when most wanted. He kept his peace ruling in their consciences always and by all means, and gave them to feel, that bodily pain could not lessen his love to them, nor abate or stop their love to him. I might bring a cloud of witnesses to prove the compassion of Jesus to his redeemed in their dying hours; but let these two suffice: Dr. Thomas Goodwin was upon his death-bed, when his friend Mr. Collins came to visit him, and to pray with him; to whom he said—He rejoiced that he was dying, and going to have a full and uninterrupted communion with God. 'I am going (said he) to the three Persons with whom I have had communion: they have taken me, I did not take them. I shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye: all my lusts and corruptions I shall be rid of, which I could not be here.'

After mentioning those great examples of faith, Hebrews, chap. xi. he said, 'All these died in faith. I could not have imagined I should ever have such a measure of faith as I have in this hour. My bow abides in strength. Is Christ divided? No. I have found the whole of his righteousness. I am found in him, not in my own righteousness, which is of the law, but in the righteousness which is of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, who loved me, and gave himself for me: Christ cannot love me better than he does, and I think I cannot love Christ better than I do: I am swallowed up in God.'

The historian remarks that with this assurance of faith, and fulness of joy, his soul left this world, and went to see and to enjoy the reality of that blessed state of glory, of which, in a discourse on that subject, he had given a very lively description.

I may be permitted to call another witness to this blessed truth, a believer who just before his death addressed himself to his friends in these words—'My brethren, is not this very amazing to you? When I contemplate the holiness of God, I cannot but cry out, that I myself am vile, most vile: and then, when I consider the justice of God, could any one imagine, but that I should be struck with most dreadful apprehensions of approaching judgment and deserved wrath? Instead of that, I am under no fear of the latter, and much desire the former. I long to appear before this holy just God; I have a righteousness to plead that is perfect. The holy Jesus is my security; and I cannot be disappointed. In Christ the justice of God is as much my security as his mercy: here is a holiness that transcends that of all the angelic host. There is no charging my Redeemer with possible folly. O I know I am pardoned for the sake of Jesus Christ, my only Lord and Mediator: I am sure of it: I am fully, freely pardoned: I shall soon be thoroughly sanctified and fitted for glory. O, I want words to express my gratitude, to tell my joy: adored be God, my Lord, my Saviour; this is the work of God alone. O unfathomable love, infinite condescension, unmerited, unbounded grace to a vile offender. I deserve hell: I enjoy heaven.'

O thou that readest this honourable mention of the love of Jesus to his dying followers, may it be given thee to find him near to thee in that time of need! If thy faith be in him, doubt not. Take courage, and live up to thy privileges. Regard his promise: observe his faithfulness to it. Depend upon his arm. Trust in him, and be not afraid. Since he has

overcome death, why shouldst thou fear that it will overcome thee? Is not his victory thine? Whatever thou feelest in thyself; if nature shrink, and thou hast many uneasy thoughts about thy dissolution, remember that all thy salvation is in and from him, and he has made thee a free gift of salvation, and of all the things which accompany salvation. He undertook it all—he has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself—he has conquered death. It is now a vanquished foe. In his hand it is the royal way to the kingdom, the only way. Trust him, he will not suffer it to hurt thee. Trust him, and thou wilt find there is nothing in it that ought to frighten thee. Breath may be failing thee, but Jesus will not fail thee. He has pronounced them blessed; he will infallibly make them blessed, who die in the Lord. Only believe, and thou wilt experience that he has dying consolations for his dying friends. They live in death. He makes them blessed in dying: yea, sometimes to encourage the faith of others, and to recommend his own grace, he has vouchsafed to give them, at the time of their death, a foretaste of the glory which was just going to be revealed. In this faith they leave the world, casting all their care, for time and for eternity, for body and soul, upon him who careth for them. Jesus, into thy hand I commend my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth. I believe in the resurrection of the body: thou hast promised it, and I hope it shall be done unto me according to thy word. Christ is the first-fruits, and afterward they that are Christ's at his coming, when he will bring the joyful harvest with him: therefore into his faithful hands I commit my body. I take my leave of it in faith. It is not possible that the grave should hold me any more than it could him. And I not only hope to be raised from the grave, but I shall be brought out of it in triumph on that day of wonders, when Jesus Christ, the great God and our Saviour, shall change this my vile body, and shall make it like unto his own most glorious body. O what a change! O what a miracle! This very body, which is now sinful dust, shall be like the Son of God, who is the standard of all perfection—even this body of mine shall be conformed to his most glorious body! although it be now a house, so infected with the leprosy of sin, that it must be taken down, yet out of its ruins will the Lord raise it a monument to his eternal praise, even a habitation of God by *his* Spirit. Come then, thou blessed of the Lord. O welcome, welcome death—thou art the smiling messenger from *my Jesus*, bringing with thee glad tidings of great joy—of a

salvation secured from all possible evil, and the enjoyment of all possible good. In sure and certain hope of this complete and eternal salvation, I resign my body into thy hands, thou Lord of life, and giver of glory—I intrust it with thee to be kept against that day, when all that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this prospect, for believing views of it, for the earnest, and for some little fortaste of it, to the eternal Three be eternal praise. Amen.

Such are the hopes of a real Christian, which he is warranted, which he is commanded to entertain in the hour of death, which God in his infinite grace actually favours his people with to the strengthening of their faith, and to the silencing of unbelievers. Never did he display his faithfulness more signally than in our times. Many instances might be given; but I select one, who thus expressed himself to his friends surrounding his death-bed.

'My soul is abundantly comforted and refreshed: my body is dying, but my mind is still vigorous and alive: I feel the cold hand of death is actually upon me; and you may feel it too, if you touch my feet and legs; they are once more clay. Blessed be God, death is no king of terrors to me. He is a welcome messenger, because sent by my heavenly Father. Here I am, O Lord, waiting thy pleasure; ready to obey the summons: thy will, O Lord, be done. Blessed be God that the attack is made below: my head is as yet very clear, and and untouched; and till my heart feels the damp, I hope to be engaged in work suitable to a death-bed: it is not to me a bed of languishing or wasting: this poor remainder of a body is hardly capable of any greater decay, till it moulders in the grave; and there let it moulder. Who would not part with it as it is? It is now my burden, my bar to happiness, a hinderance to a lively spiritual communion with God. But, O my friends, it is united to Christ, and shall therefore one day become a glorious body. This corruption shall put on incorruption, and shall be for ever with the Lord.' Thanks be to God for such a witness—may my latter end be like his.

CHAP X.

The character of the persons who have most reason to triumph in Christ.

THEY are such as know most of themselves, and have seen the deepest into the mystery of iniquity. The Holy Spirit

has convinced them of sin—of original sin, the fountain from which all the streams flow of actual sin in thought, word, and deed. In this conviction he has put life and power: it is far more than a moral persuasion—he makes it practical and abiding: for the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus quickens the dead sinner, and, making him free from the law of sin and of death, gives him the faith of God's elect: and by the daily use and exercise of that faith makes him more sensible of his obligations to Jesus. In every act of faith he leads the believer out of self to the Saviour—humbles him that he may exalt Christ—empties him of self that he may fill him with the good things of Christ—casts down, and keeps down, every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. In his hand, and by his blessing, this work prospers. The loftiness of man is humbled, and the haughtiness of man is bowed down, and Jehovah alone is exalted in that day—according to the oracle of truth—'He shall glorify me'—which is the office of the Holy Spirit to testify of Christ, and to glorify Christ, by taking of the things of Christ, and by putting the believer into the possession of them.

In this school of humility every view that can be taken of self is abasing: and as the lesson becomes more and better experienced, sin more discovered in its exceeding wickedness, and more felt in its exceeding great danger, the believer is enabled to rejoice more in Christ Jesus, as he has less confidence in the flesh. And when he attains to the highest of his triumph, which he can have in Christ in this world, he is then the lowest in his own eyes:

When he looks back and surveys what he was by nature and practice—

When he considers what he is now, although he be renewed by grace—

And when he looks forward to what he hopes to be at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ—

Every thing in the Scripture-doctrine, and every thing in Scripture-experience, leads him to conclude—Behold I am vile, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes: so that whenever he is tempted to glory, he has nothing left him to glory in, but the Lord: self always abased, that Christ alone may be exalted.

When he looks back on what he was by nature and practice: *the* more he knows he will be the more deeply humbled, *for what* he was when under the law, and under sin, and for

what he still feels of a body of sin and of death. He was the creature of God's power, made out of nothing—distinguished by his being in the image of God, and by being capable of communion with him in all the graces and blessings of his love. He was under the best law that could be given him for promoting God's glory and his own happiness. He was bound to perfect and continual obedience to it, and was left to his own will and power, that he should not offend in any one point: but upon his transgression he became liable to suffer the threatened pains and penalties of the broken law. Every right view of himself in this state ought to humble and to abase the sinner, and it effectually does, when the conviction is from God. He then finds that his nature was earthly, sensual, and having not the Spirit, it was alienated from the life of God. All his thoughts and actions were not only irregular, but also contrary to the holy law. His very imagination was evil, only evil, and that continually. His understanding was not only ignorant of spiritual things, but was darkness itself. His will was a rebel. His affections apostate, ever at enmity with God. Misery and destruction were in his ways: of the way of peace he had no knowledge, neither was there any fear of God before his eyes: for although death and hell were threatened, and were ready to give him the just wages of his iniquity, yet he was kept careless and secure. Like the atheists of old, when warned of their approaching destruction by the prophet —'Let us eat and drink (say they,) for to-morrow we shall die.'

This true knowledge of the exceeding evil of sin, and the right humiliation for it, come by believing, and are the genuine fruits and effects of it. Legal conviction has guilt and bondage in it, and worketh sorrow unto death. But this conviction of the Holy Spirit reveals the remedy along with the disease, and produces such a repentance as is not to be repented of—a turning from sin to Christ—teaching us practically and daily, what we are in ourselves, and how much we want such an almighty Saviour, to teach us how to trust in him as our great high-priest, and to live happy and holy under his government, which is perfect freedom. Every act of this faith is humbling. The believer is made to feel his need of that in himself, which he is commanded to trust in Christ for. And the more he is enabled to depend upon Christ, he will certainly have the less in himself. And when his whole dependance is, as it ought to be, fixed upon Christ, he will come to the apostle's experience, even so to rejoice in Christ Jesus, as to put no confidence in the flesh. Herein consists the tri-

umph of the Christian. In every step of his walk and warfare he is led from self to Christ—kept humbled in his own eyes that he may exalt the Saviour—emptied of self that he may live upon the fulness of Jesus, and may thereby be taught to rest his heart in him at all times, and for all things.

With respect to sin, which is his daily burden, under which he is always sorrowing, yet in Christ he can always rejoice. The more he knows of the exceeding wickedness of sin, the more precious is Jesus, and the more does he value the blood of the Lamb of God, which cleanseth from all sin. In his conscience, purged from guilt, he can triumph with exceeding great joy, that there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus; for where sin abounded, grace does much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. His grateful acknowledgments are such as these:

I was even as others once—by nature a child of wrath, and an heir of misery—I was going on in the broad way of destruction—careless and secure—and I am quite astonished to see the danger that I was in—I trembled to behold the precipice which I was ready to fall over, when Jesus opened mine eyes, and by the light of his word and Spirit, shewed me my guilt and my danger, and put it into my heart to flee from the wrath to come. O what a most merciful escape! I cannot think of it without adoring the compassionate Saviour, who remembered me in my low estate; for his mercy endureth for ever: and hath redeemed me from the hand of all mine enemies; for his mercy endureth for ever: not unto me, in the least, but to the super-abounding grace of my God be all the glory. That the Father would make me an object of his choice and love. That Jesus Immanuel would humble himself to be manifest in the flesh, and be obedient unto death, for me and for my salvation. That the Holy Ghost would give me a new birth into the spiritual world, and would quicken me into union with Jesus, and to the enjoyment of the Father's love in him—adored for ever and ever be the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity. That such a filthy sinner should be cleansed from all sin—that such an ungodly creature should be freely justified by grace—that such a miserable sinner should be blessed with all spiritual blessings—that such a weak creature should be strengthened mightily by the Spirit *in the* inner man, and when weakest in myself, then to be *strongest* in the Lord—O what riches! what unsearchable

riches of grace are these! Abide with me, O thou Spirit of the Father and the Son, and keep me constantly dependent on the fresh supplies of thy divine influence. By thy daily teaching keep open to me the depth and mystery of iniquity, the exceeding wickedness of sin—of *my* sin—that by thy holy inspiration I may live more by faith, and nothing may be suffered to hinder my growing fellowship with the Father and the Son, until I am admitted to full and eternal fellowship. Amen.

Thus reflecting with self-abhorrence what he was by nature, when he was under the law, and under sin, which is the transgression of the law, alive to sin, but dead to God, he is led to consider,

What he is now, although he be renewed by grace, a believer and a man in Christ: how he feels himself, after much and sound experience of his title to salvation, and of his enjoyment of the things which accompany salvation—every day and in every thing he has fresh matter for the deepest humiliation. He finds, that he is still a man in Adam—still he carries about him a sinful nature, an old man as well as a new, a body of sin with all its members; he has spirit, but he has also flesh, and that which is born of the flesh is flesh, nothing but corruption, as that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The old man has flesh still, with all its appetites and lusts: the new man is by the Spirit of life, that is in Christ Jesus, alive to God. In the same person sin dwelleth as we read, 'When we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. And the new man liveth, who, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.' The apostle, in Romans, chap. vii. not only confesses that he had nature and grace in him at the same time, but also describes it at full length. Indwelling sin was his continual grief, and his heavy burden: an apostle in Christ, and yet he felt the plague of his own heart: and it was his daily cross, which he was forced to bear—and his constant enemy, against which he was always at war—no peace, no truce could be made. The flesh was ever lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these two with such unceasing opposition, night and day, that he could not do the things that he would, either so continually or so perfectly. He describes this battle as it was carried on in his own experience, the two combatants striving in him for mastery. He was a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and *as well instructed* and armed as ever any believer was for this

warfare; having on the whole armour of God, and yet wearied with this daily conflict, he is forced to cry out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' He had no deliverance in or from himself, it was against himself that he fought, and of himself he was led to despair. But, looking to Jesus, he takes courage, assuring himself of a complete victory, and of an everlasting triumph in the Captain of his salvation—'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then (this is the conclusion of the whole matter,) so then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.'

This is still the experience of every true believer, at all times, and upon all occasions: he has a practical comment upon the seventh chapter of the Romans in his own bosom: he has heartfelt experience of the warfare between the flesh and the spirit; he finds it hard fighting; harder, because it is continual—it will never cease so long as flesh is flesh, that is, so long as the believer lives in the body, and in the present world. Indwelling sin never rests—it is like the troubled sea, always casting up its filthy motions, and then the most troublesome when he would be the freest from them. O what humbling lessons does he learn in all his approaches to God: he knows his privileges, and he wishes to live up to them, but he cannot. When he would draw near to God in the prayer of faith, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. On his bended knees desiring to confess his sins, and to humble himself under the mighty hand of God, imploring pardon through the redemption that is in the blood of the Lamb, and expecting it freely, as the most sovereign mercy that a poor sinner can receive—alas, alas! even then shame and confusion cover his face. He desires to keep his thoughts from wandering, he would have his whole heart engaged in the duty, but he cannot. His imagination is not to be restrained. When he would be uniting all his affections in fervent and effectual prayer—vain, foolish thoughts force themselves upon him—he drives them away as Abraham did the birds which came down upon the sacrifice, but they will return. He mourns, as well he may, for these distractions of his mind, and is deeply convinced, that a most holy God might justly condemn him for his very best devotions. He is therefore led to put them into the hands of the Mediator, that he may perfume them with much of his incense for their acceptance, and through his intercession, and through that only, he may obtain an answer of grace.

Neither can he trust in his praises any more than in his prayers. Let him praise ever so much, and ever so well, yet he can make no suitable acknowledgments for the blessing of creation. Once he was nothing: for his being at all—for such a being, rather than any other—for being made a man, and at first highly favoured with the image and friendship of God—who can express the noble acts of the Lord, or shew forth all his praise for the miracle of creation? but who can conceive how great, how endless, are the blessings of this new creation? for they are all gifts of God's grace—distinguishing and sovereign—given to sinners as sinners—to the chief of sinners—continued to the unworthy—increased to the unthankful—how great in their nature—how invaluable the sum of them! The believer, deeply impressed with these sentiments, acknowledges that he is less than the least of all God's mercies; yea, he is sensible that he deserves the heaviest of the Divine vengeance: so that his prayer, *God be merciful to me a sinner*, lays the foundation of his very best praises. He who has most forgiven will love most. He who feels what he really is among the chief of sinners, will be among the chief of those worshippers who ascribe all their salvation to God and the Lamb. The humblest among them will feel that they have most reason to be thankful. But still their praises are no payment. They must receive fresh grace to praise with, and more grace to praise better. The debt increases by the addition of fresh gifts of grace, and leaves the believer nothing to glory in but the Lord—to be saved—to feel it—to enjoy it by faith—to be made and to be kept thankful, giving all the glory where it is due; these are among the mercies which endure for ever.

In this school of self-abasement he is taught to be humbled for his short attainments in the Scriptures, read, or preached, or meditated on. How seldom does he attend the word, as that congregation did—'Behold we are all here present before God to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.' This preparation of heart was from the Lord. He disposed Cornelius and his family to receive the word aright, and his blessing came upon them in hearing it: for while Peter was speaking, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. And it would be so still if there was the same dependance on his grace, and the prayer of faith for his teaching along with the word. How little is this depended upon under hearing, although the profit be entirely from him: how seldom is the mixing faith with it received and acknowledged, therefore the memory keeps little impression of the word, and in heart

it is not fruitful as it ought to be. On all these accounts the believer mourns and is humbled before God. He feels it to be true: 'I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.' He is sensible of these failings and distractions, even when he labours to be most free from them. He is going to the Lord's table to be fed and feasted, hoping that he is one with Christ, and Christ is one with him. He would gladly partake of the fruits and blessings of this union by communion with Christ, by receiving the bread of life, and the cup of salvation, according to Christ's holy institution. He comes in faith to eat the flesh of Christ, and to drink his blood in grateful remembrance of him—according as he hath been taught—The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for me, preserve my body and soul unto eternal life—I take and I eat this bread, and I take and I drink this cup, in remembrance that Christ died for me, and I desire to feed on him in my heart by faith with thanksgiving. In this service he would have his whole soul engaged, that nothing might interrupt his communion with his Beloved. But vain thoughts, which lodge within him, will break out. They intrude, although most unwelcome guests, into this banquet of love; so that he is constrained to cry out, Lord Jesus, pardon the failings of my holy things: I come to the throne of thy grace, that I may obtain mercy, and may find more grace to help me in every time of need.

When he is led to consider what is the cause of all these failings—O what an abiding lesson of humility has he to learn! he sees that they all spring from the bitter root of unbelief, and are the fruits of remaining corruption; which can only be kept down, and conquered, as the strength of Christ apprehended by faith prevails over them. Self, pride, legality, nurse them: they have their being, their activity, their power, from those fleshly lusts which war against the soul, and render the whole life of the believer one continued act of self-denial. He has still a body of sin, with all its members, mixing with every duty, so that he cannot ground his faith and hope upon the best of them. The work of Jesus upon earth, the intercession of Jesus in heaven, are the sole ground of his confidence towards God. His motive is good—he aims at pleasing God in all things, he would do his will, and suffer his will, as it is his bounden duty, with faith and patience. His end is good—he would gladly keep the glory of God in his eye, and direct all *he does* to it, as his elder brethren do in heaven: but he can-

not. When the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. Yet he is not so discouraged as to give over and cease his approaches to God, because of his infirmities. Having obtained help of God, he fights on the good fight of faith. He does not leave off praying because he is not so spiritual as he desires to be; but he is rather more earnest and fervent. The Spirit, helping his infirmities, keeps him in an humble dependance upon Jesus, waiting on him for due sense of his wants, for the acceptance of his prayers, for a supply of them, for pardoning the failings of them, for more faith in them, and for enabling him to continue instant in prayer, according to the divine command, that 'men ought always to pray, and not to faint;' which supposes them to be kept in a praying frame, and to use the means which St. Jude recommends for the obtaining of these blessings: 'But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.'

As he is not weary of his prayers, because they are not so spiritual as he could wish, so neither is he weary of his praises, although they fall far short of what such a Saviour deserves, and of what he would acknowledge with all possible gratitude: because he falls short, he aims higher. He feels himself under infinite obligations to the Father for his love, to the Son for his salvation, and by the supply of the Spirit's grace he is made sensible, that he is not only less than the least of divine mercies; but if he had his just deserts, he should have judgment without mercy. This lays the foundation for his highest praises. The faithful witness for Jesus makes the believer willing to be beholden to him for every mercy: yea, to glory in being a pensioner upon his fulness; from which he receives grace for grace, that in all things he may be giving of thanks: according to the Lord's favour to his people, informing them to take with them words, and turn to the Lord, and say unto him, 'Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips,' which is the sacrifice of the New Testament worshippers, who through Jesus the Mediator offer the sacrifice of praise continually: that is, the fruit of their lips giving thanks to his name, wishing, praying to do it with some of the praises of heaven; as one said, 'I will hope continually, and I will yet praise thee more and more.'

As these prayers and praises are grounded upon faith in the divine promises, this makes the believer a diligent reader of the Scriptures. He does not neglect his Bible, because he has

not yet attained the perfect knowledge of every part of it. For that very reason he studies it more: he prays more over it, grows more thankful for the divine power, which still accompanies it, and studies and prays that he may experience more of this power: it has been the means of making him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. He finds it also to be the food of this faith—it nourishes him, and he grows thereby. He hears, reads, meditates, and keeps on praying to the Holy Ghost to write the Scriptures upon his heart, and to make his life a fair copy of them. And what he thus learns, preserves him in a settled dependance upon the faithfulness of God to his word and promise. And he is not disappointed: he finds that all the Scripture, which was given by the inspiration of God, is still profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. This blessing he has in his Bible. The more he can mix faith with it, the more precious it becomes. His Bible is his library: the study therein makes him wise for eternity: which is the superlative excellency of Bible knowledge, of which Jesus thus speaks: 'Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors: for whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.'

Thus in the use of means he is kept humble and dependent, exercising the true gospel poverty of spirit in self-abasement; and, so far from being stopped, that he rather glories and triumphs in his infirmities. The opposition which they give helps him forward, they are always driving him out of self to Christ, teaching him the necessity of the supplies of the Spirit, making him more diligent, and keeping him more humble in the use of the means: and thus he learns to live more by faith upon Christ, and to seek more close communion with him, and his fulness, especially at his table. He does not absent himself from it, because he has not the fellowship there, so close, intimate, and abiding, as he could wish, or because the last time he was there he was not so lively as he used to be, or because he was unworthy, and full of complaints. He has tasted that the Lord is gracious; and this taste has increased his hunger and thirst: the food, which he wants, he does not carry with him, but he goes to receive it. When he hears his Lord's command—Take, eat this bread—drink this cup—do ye this in remembrance of me—he obeys, believing the promise; this is my body, given for you: this is my blood, shed for you. The

more faith in the promise, there will be the more appetite and the more nourishment received from the spiritual food; for then the Holy Spirit puts his influence into the elements, and the communicant eats the flesh of Christ indeed, and drinks his blood indeed; having by faith communion with him in the bread and wine. At this table the believer is fed, nourished, and feasted with the bread that cometh down from heaven, even angels' food: for he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever, according to the Lord's own promise; 'Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' The believer has this in his eye, both in what the banquet is now, and in what it is the pledge and earnest of, when it shall be realized. Faith gives a substance to the things promised and hoped for: it has the earnest and the pledge of them; as certainly as we have the one, so certainly shall we have the other. A faithful God gives us this security—Whoso is one by faith with Jesus shall sit down at the marriage-supper of the Lamb: whoso eateth and drinketh at his table here, in faith, shall infallibly eat and drink with him at his table in his kingdom of glory. The sure and certain hope of this makes our present feast at the Lord's supper a happy foretaste of that eternal banquet, when he will vouchsafe to admit us to the honours of his table, and of his kingdom. O blessed, most blessed time! the prospect is animating. it brightens the darkest day of affliction, refreshes the spirits under the heaviest trials, and is a rich cordial under the deepest feeling of indwelling sin. Where Christ is, all is blessed. Union with him is heaven begun, and this the believer is called to enjoy; even to enjoy communion with him in all he is and has. Christ is one with him. Christ will not leave him, nor forsake him: nothing is able to separate the members from the Head. He who has begun the good work has given the fullest security that he will not leave it unfinished. He will carry it on unto the end: for he is faithful who hath promised. The apostle applies the words spoken to Joshua, and says, that they were spoken also to us, that we might trust and not be afraid: 'This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein. For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? be strong, and of a good courage: be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest.' And he went out strong in the Lord, and in the power of his

might. He fought the Lord's battles, and prospered, until the whole land was subdued before him. There failed not aught of any good thing, which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass. Even so shall it be to the whole Israel of God. Every good soldier of Christ Jesus shall be kept safe by his almighty power, and under his banner shall fight the good fight of faith, until he obtains the promised inheritance, which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them. He has taken possession of it in their name, as their surety, and not one of them can perish: for he keeps the inheritance for them, and them for it: yea, the day is hastening on, when he will present all his redeemed unto the Father. 'Of those whom thou hast given me have I lost none; behold I and the children whom thou hast given me.'

On all these accounts it is evident, that a believer every day, and in every thing, finds matter for the deepest humiliation. He has still a body of sin, remaining corruptions, daily infirmities, and short-comings. All that he has of his own abases him in his own eyes: so that his triumph is never in himself. His salvation, with all its graces and blessings, depends entirely upon what he is in Christ. On this foundation he may rest safely always, notwithstanding he has nothing of his own to glory in. Most of his mistakes and miseries come from his seeking to be independent of Christ—hoping to find that in himself, or in the world, which is only in Christ. Self-love is unwilling to be beholden to Christ for every good thing; it is always trying to put some confidence in the flesh: but the believer is commanded, and is taught, to deny self—to put it upon the cross—and to crucify it daily with its affections and lusts:—as Christ is exalted, self goes down: as Christ is beloved, self is not only denied, but is also abhorred. The prophet Ezekiel, in the thirty-sixth chapter, describes the very height of the experience of a great believer, who is blessed with the abundant graces of the Holy Spirit: the result of which is, 'Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities, and for your abominations: not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you; be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.' Such is the genuine working of true grace—it lays the sinner low at the Saviour's feet, abased and humbled to the dust—Behold, I am vile—I abhor myself, and I repent in dust and ashes The sense of God's distin-

guishing and sovereign mercy brings all high thoughts of self into subjection to Christ Jesus, and teaches the believer to walk humbly with his God, ascribing all his salvation to the praise of the glory of the exceeding riches of God's grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus: that, according as it is written, 'He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.'

Thus it is evident, that when the believer looks back upon what he was by nature, or considers what he now is by grace, he has nothing of his own to boast of; yet even in this continual warfare between the flesh and the spirit, in Christ Jesus he may rejoice even to a triumph—a jubilee of joy. But the grand triumph is yet to come. The best glorying in the Lord here is only a prelude to it. Now we have the espousals with our heavenly Bridegroom, but then the marriage will be consummated. Now we are kept waiting in hope for the crown of righteousness, but that will be our coronation day. What a day will it be! What wonders and miracles! The promises, exceeding great and exceeding precious, will then have their full and everlasting accomplishment by a faithful God, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them who have believed. When they shall see him face to face—shall be with him where he is—shall be like him, and made capable of enjoying the honours, and riches, and pleasures of his kingdom, in their fulness of blessedness for evermore.

CHAP. XI.

The eternal triumph.

This is the great lesson which the believer is learning, till he comes to the end of his faith—what is promised him, and what he hopes to be at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the centre, to which all his experience tends: and while he keeps it in view, it so enlivens and animates his prospect, that come what may, he goes on his way rejoicing, in hope of the glory of God. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.' And by his holy inspiration he opens the eyes of the understanding, both to understand what is revealed, and also to know the things that are freely given to us of God: for great as they are, endless

as they are, the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned: but he that is spiritual has spiritual senses given him to exercise upon spiritual things—he is made certain of their reality—his faith gives a substance to the things hoped for, and evidence to the things not seen—a hope that never maketh ashamed—an evidence very clear and satisfying: sometimes he can triumph in hope of the glory of God, when the Holy Spirit sheds abroad in his heart the Father's love, and bestows great joy and peace in believing: but he who is thus taught of God knows only in part—an apostle knew no more. The best of our present enjoyment is only a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. But even this little is of such a nature, and has such efficacy, that when it is truly believed, it influences the whole man, while he looks not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. They are not seen by the eye of the body, but are visible by the eye of faith: so we read, 'Come taste and see, how gracious the Lord is.' By this eye of faith Moses saw him that is invisible: and this sight so affected him, and had such an influence upon his heart and life, that he lived above the world with all its temptations. This is the victory that overcame the world, even his faith. The same sight still works the same effect—producing a real value for spiritual and eternal things, and forming the heart to love and to practise the apostle's rule—'My conversation is in heaven, from whence also I look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.'

In the Scripture view of our victory in Christ, there are two great points, which will take in all that is revealed of our eternal triumph, namely, the complete conquest of all our enemies, and the full and eternal enjoyment of all possible good. These two truths come now under our consideration; and if we can meditate upon them under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and mix faith with his revelation, we shall have a good warrant to begin those praises, which will never end; and to sing in harmony with all the redeemed, our everlasting jubilee.

When we come to the end of our faith, even the eternal salvation of our souls, our victory is described to be a perfect deliverance from all evil—from sin, from suffering. Sin has brought all pain into the world—miseries upon the body—miseries upon the soul—spiritual wickedness—numerous

hosts of foes—mighty principalities and powers: it has armed thousands, yea millions, of them for our destruction—made us our own enemies by enslaving us to divers lusts and passions, making us the prey to earthly, sensual, devilish tempers; and, as if there was not suffering enough in the world, filling us with many imaginary fears, which occasion real suffering. At last come the wages of sin—death with terrors—hell with its torments. O what a Deliverer! what a deliverance! not one enemy left. They are all brought under, and subdued, to rise no more. The Captain of our salvation has vanquished them for us. His victory is the earnest of ours. His was complete, so is ours. No sin, no suffering, can come near the habitation of his holiness. Indeed, he suffered once for sin; but he put it away by that sacrifice of himself. By faith we have the benefit of his suffering, a conscience purged from guilt, no condemnation left, no charge from any enemy. God himself justifies, God himself sees us, accepts us, glorifies us, in and with his Son: for in that day he will present us to his Father, without spot of sin, unto eternal salvation.

Of this blessed and complete victory over all sin, and all suffering, the prophet Isaiah had a delightful prospect, speaking of it in these words: 'And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and shall come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.' O give thanks unto the Lord Jehovah, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever: let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy: they have as much to thank their Redeemer for, as any creature possibly can have: his ransomed were under sin, helpless, miserable, dying sinners: from this slavery he bought them with an inestimable price, and they are become his property, his peculiar people, who have through him liberty to return to God, and to serve him without fear on earth, and to bless him for giving them freedom to come to Zion, to the city of the living God, with songs of gratitude and praise: they have everlasting joy upon their heads—crowned conquerors! they have the joys of heaven, and the gladness of eternity, in their hearts, which exclude all pain, and all sorrow—no fear can enter there—not one sigh. The Lord himself is their portion, and they shall reign with him for ever and ever.

The beloved John was favoured with a view of the same eternal conquest which the ransomed of the Lord shall have over all their enemies, and he speaks of it thus: 'And I heard

a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more curse, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away: and he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new.' This is Jesus, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who reigneth the Lord God Omnipotent for this very purpose, that this scripture may be fulfilled to the uttermost, and to eternity. He was the Word made flesh, who tabernacled amongst us, being that most holy temple which God pitched, and not man: out of whose fulness believers receive all grace and all glory: the compassions of Jesus are like himself, infinite and endless. He loves his redeemed too well to let either sin or sorrow come near them. They might have been holy mourners in their pilgrimage, when they went through the valley of Baca, but now he has wiped away their tears, all tears from their eyes. The curse that causes them he has removed. That death, the wages of which they deserved, he has changed into life. The pillars in his house, which are to go out no more, are thereby delivered from sorrow, and crying, and from every pain: all the former things are passed away —sin is no more—pain is no more. Into the kingdom of Jesus nothing of the old man is suffered to enter: for he creates all things new. The Lord from heaven makes all his people like himself, conformed to his own image in righteousness and true holiness. A more perfect victory cannot be imagined, than to have enemies so vanquished, all enemies, that they shall never have entrance into the kingdom of God and his Christ. When believers shall come to the end of their faith, they shall not only be thus saved from all possible evil—but who can conceive what their actual enjoyments will then be? To be saved from all sin, from all the effects of sin, is a great mercy, yet it is only a part of our salvation. But looking at the world lying in wickedness, beholding the variety of pains and miseries in it, from which no one is exempt—no state of life free from them—the palace as full of them as the cottage—kingdoms convulsed—infidelity spreading its poisonous influence, and attempting to destroy all good order and government—old age bringing its infirmities, and death hastening—it is certainly a great deliverance, that none of those evils can approach us any more. Blessed be God the Saviour for this

great mercy. It is through his grace that his kingdom of glory will be kept in perfect peace; no evil, no fear of evil, shall for one moment interrupt the happiness of his subjects. But what is this compared to the actual enjoyment of all possible good: who is able to declare fully what this will be at the appearing of Jesus, the great God? We must wait for the full manifestation of the sons of God! But yet there is a great deal revealed, which belongs to us and our children: and if we can read it in faith, with prayer, and with a continual dependance upon the teaching and application of the Holy Spirit, he will give us to form our hearts and lives upon the certainty of what he has revealed: for our conversation will then be in heaven, and we shall have both the knowledge, and also the experience, of heavenly things, growing according to our faith. The word revelation signifies taking off the veil or covering from any thing, that it may be seen clearly; in the Scripture sense it is removing the veil from heavenly things, which is the work of the Holy Spirit, creating spiritual senses to exercise upon those heavenly things, of which the natural man can have no just ideas; for he cannot understand nor receive the things that are freely given to us of God: but he that is taught of God has evidence given him of the reality and of the blessedness of those things which are revealed, and by faith enjoyed. When such an one reads what God said to Abraham, 'After these things the word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.' He reads it for himself: he makes the promise his own, and trusts in it as steadfastly as if God had spoken it to him by a voice from heaven; for so is he warranted to apply it by the apostle. Now it was not written for his sake alone, but for us also: no scripture being of any private interpretation. The gift of grace to Abraham was nothing short of an infinite good—for it was God himself: I will be thy God. What is meant by this relation has been largely treated of in the former treatises. It is only needful to add, that it denotes the relation in which the holy Trinity stand to believers, and the covenant-engagements to them. God is theirs—He is their Father, the Son is their Saviour, the Spirit of life has enabled them to receive the Son, and they are one with him, he dwelling in their hearts by faith, and through him they are one with his Father: as the Lord said in his prayer—'Neither pray I for these alone (the apostles,) but for them also who shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and

I in thee, that they also may be one in us.' This prayer was for all the chosen of the Father, given to the Son, redeemed by him, and in due time quickened by the Spirit, and brought into the same covenant-relation, and partakers of the same covenant-blessings, as Abraham was. What was promised to him, was promised to all that walk in the steps of his faith, the whole family and household of faith: it is as if God had said, Fear not, believer; I myself, Jehovah in trinity, will be your present salvation, to shield you from all sins and enemies, and I myself will be your exceeding great reward. Who can tell what the believer shall then be, when this promise shall be fulfilled! when he shall be brought as near to the godhead as a creature can possibly be, joined to the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit, a habitation of God through the Spirit, and through Jesus unto the Father, and in this holy and blessed communion, finding an eternal heaven of happiness, an exceeding great reward. When it is received in this its fulness it is a reward, but of grace, a gift of sovereign mercy—great, something worthy of the great God—like himself—exceeding great, eternally great. O, Holy Ghost, keep the hope of it lively: O make it every day more lively, till, through thy blessing, I come to know it as it is.

The Psalmist, speaking of this happiness, suits his description to our present method of understanding spiritual things, as they are imaged to us by material. The pleasures of our senses are made use of to give us ideas of that happiness which is to be found in God; for it is all in him: he is heaven. The enjoyment of him in glory is the heaven of heavens. 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness: for thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' All this, great and endless as it is, belongs to them who have God for their God: for when they are admitted into his presence they shall be made like him. O marvellous change—capable of enjoying him, so as to be quite satisfied—finding in him a fulness of joy—pleasures divinely great, abundant, a river of pleasures—yea, a fountain of pleasures springing up into everlasting life. Every sense shall be gratified to the uttermost, and that for evermore. Blessed be God for this unspeakable gift: and has he not herein vouchsafed us matter of triumph? May not the believer, ought he not, to rejoice with exceeding *great joy*, who has this prospect before him? Who that is out of heaven can have more reason than he has? Survey it, O

my soul: take a narrow review of it. Examine over and over again the Psalmist's description of it, and see what can be added to make it absolutely perfect. If nothing can, if it be as full as God can make it, may my heart grow in holy desires after the glory that is to be revealed, and triumph in the God of my salvation.

Our Lord gives us the same description in these words, speaking to his apostles. 'I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me (in the surest, fullest manner, that it can be conveyed)—that ye may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom, and sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' The king of this holy land is Immanuel—God Jesus: he is the King of kings, the Lord, creator of all worlds, and the government of them all is upon his shoulders, and the names of his redeemed are written upon his heart. For them he has made abundant provision, that they may feast with him at his table, and may be receiving out of his fulness every grace that can make them completely and eternally blessed: for they shall sit down with him upon his throne, and shall share with him in all his royalties, blessing and adoring him in their everlasting songs of triumph. 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.' The apostle John calls upon us *now* to begin the heavenly song: and he would have us to do it with the sweetest melody in our hearts, praising our sovereign Lord, who has taken our nature into union with himself, in order that by his Spirit we might be joined to him, our glorified Head, and might by faith partake of his holy and heavenly nature. No words can describe more fully the dignity to which, by virtue of this union, we shall be exalted: nay, it is not to be conceived at present how great it will be. 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know, that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is: and every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure.' O what a dignity is this! what upon earth is to be compared for one moment to it —Sons of God!—Sons of Adam, who have borne the image of the earthly, advanced to bear the image of the heavenly! This is a glory which surpasseth all understanding. It did

not yet appear as it is to the beloved John: he knew as much of it, as perhaps ever man did, but it was far greater than his knowledge. He knew it but in part: he was indeed sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession: but the earnest is not the inheritance itself. It is only a pledge and a security, that, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, the great God and our Saviour, we shall be put into full possession. At present we have it in the promise of the God of truth; and faith in his promise begets a hope, that will never make us ashamed; because it will keep us patiently waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, when we shall come to the eternal enjoyment of all riches, and pleasures, and honours, of our sonship with Christ our glorified Head.

The apostle would lead us also to consider the fountain from whence all this blessedness springs; from the Father—what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us. The love expressed by this name, Father, has no parallel. It had no beginning, and it will have no ending. It is from everlasting to everlasting—bringing with it out of its infinite ocean all the streams of grace, which make glad the city of God, and never stopping till it return with all the happy objects of his love to the same great ocean again. The apostle would have us to behold, and to admire, the miracles of the Father's love, which he purposed and wrought out, and bestowed upon us, who are sinners, even as others, and yet to the everlasting praise and glory of his grace—chosen—called—effectually, brought into the family and household of faith by the Spirit of adoption, and ennobled—sons of God—what an exaltation!—what a blessedness! made the children of God—heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ—with him who is Lord of all—admitted to share with him in his kingdom, his crown, his glories: according to his own prayer—'Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory,' may be with me, may be like me. O what an animating view is here for the highest rejoicing of faith and hope! Christ, by taking our nature into union with himself, has advanced it into the greatest dignity of which it is capable: for it is heaven to be with him, where he is in his glory: like him, conformed to that standard of all perfection in body and soul, perfectly and eternally; what a hope should this beget and cherish, even a hope full of glory and immor*tality*! especially as all this honour is according to the Father's *covenant* purposes: 'for whom he did foreknow, them he also

did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren: moreover, whom he did predestinate them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we say to these things!' can there be greater grace shewn from the God of all grace? can there be higher honour conferred, than to be so exalted from the depth of sin and misery, as to be raised to the honours of sonship, even to a conformity to the Son of God. O what sentiments had that blessed man of it, when he said, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake after thy likeness: for thou wilt shew me the path of life. In thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' Conformity to Jesus brings with it this fulness of joy; and the hope of it is an active and a lively grace: for every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as Christ is pure. This is the mark at which the believer aims, he wishes to be like Christ, and to be more like him: he would feel more of the power of the cross of Christ to crucify him in the body of sin, and more of the power of the risen Jesus, that there may be a real growth into him, and that in all things: thus he purifies his heart and life by that faith in Jesus, of which the apostle thus speaks: 'Brethren, I have not yet attained what I am striving for; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'

These are some of the Scripture authorities, from which this conclusion may be fairly drawn—that a believer, whatever view he may take of himself, either from what he was, when dead in trespasses and sins, or from what he now is, quickened by the Spirit of Christ, and living by faith, yet crying out, under a sense of his corruptions, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me!' yet he may thank God through Jesus Christ his Lord: for he is warranted, he is commanded to rejoice in the Lord always, and to triumph in the God of his salvation. And he has enough given him in hand to exercise that strong faith, which will administer strong consolation, even great, very great joy and peace in believing: for the word of God cannot be broken, his promises cannot fail, his covenant engagements are immutable, given as infallible security to the believer, that his faith may not stagger at any difficulty; but, looking to a faithful God, he may go on his way rejoicing, ***in hope of the glory of God.***

These are some of the blessed effects of looking to Jesus and living by faith upon him and his fulness. In this way there is continual matter of triumph. Let the believer look back on what he was by nature, or on what he is now in his renewed state by grace, or looking forward to the glory that is to be revealed at the appearing of his Saviour, when he shall be with him in the kingdom which cannot be moved, and shall be like him, all his members conformed to their most glorious Head, and partaking of his divine riches, and honours, and pleasures; what upon earth can exceed such a prospect! What can administer greater happiness, than to have the evidence of it kept clear and open! what can make life more comfortable, and the end of our faith more desirable, than such great and blessed things! promised and given most freely in time, yea, in the fullest manner that almighty love can bestow them in eternity.

For such mercies bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

O thou beginning and ending, the first and the last, the author and the finisher of the faith, Jehovah Jesus. I have been looking up to thee for thy divine teaching, and I am still looking up to thee for thy divine blessing on this my offering. It is a poor mite, which I would cast into thy treasury as my dying testimony for the truth and for the power of thy gospel. Be pleased to accept it out of thine infinite condescension. Thou knowest the heart of thy servant: whatever is right in it is thine own, the work of thine own grace. Failings there are, and they are mine: of thy mercy pardon them. And make use of this little treatise, as it shall seem best to thy godly wisdom, for the increase of faith in thy church, and for the advancement of thine own fame and glory, that more honour may be put upon thy word, more dependance exercised upon thy faithfulness, and there may be a growing conformity to it in the hearts and lives of thy people. Be pleased, merciful Saviour, to accompany the reading of it with thy Spirit for these purposes, and I shall be amply rewarded. May thy grace, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with us all. Amen.

END OF THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH.